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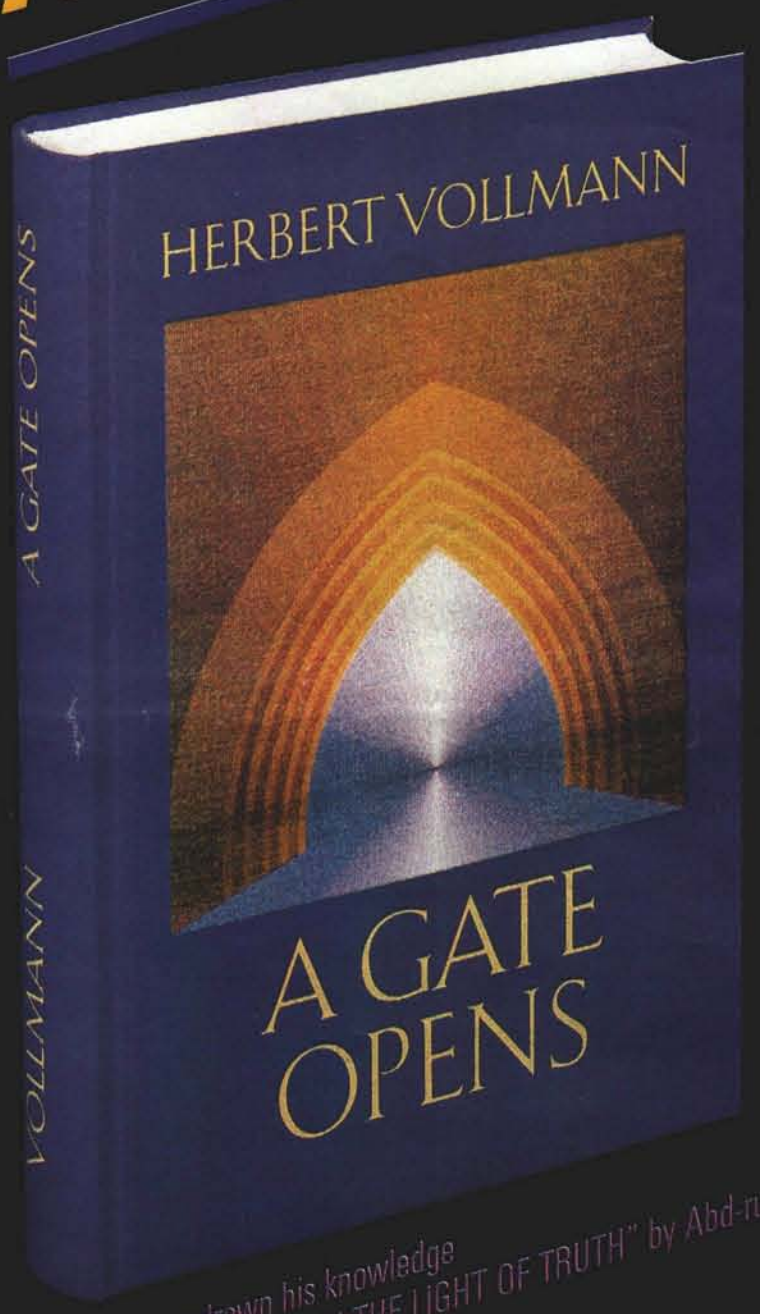

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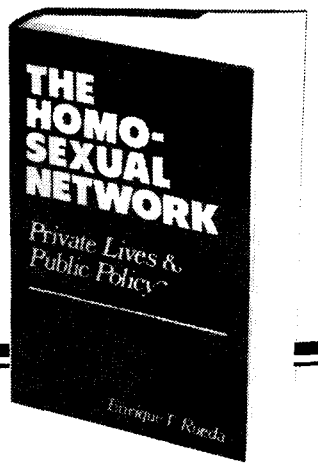

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

Volume 19 Number 12, December 1986

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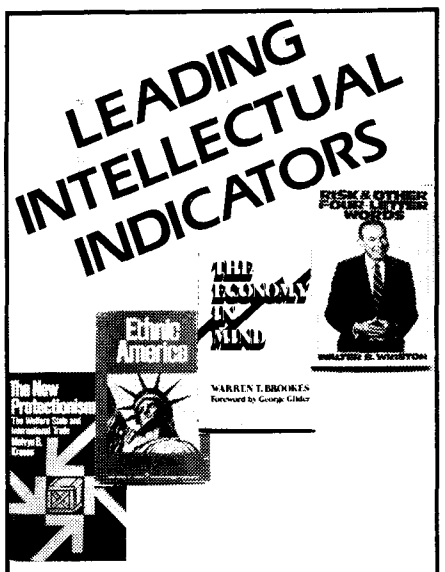

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•October fades into dusty memory, and with it the 99th Congress of the United States. And into history Mr. Tip O'Neill—Speaker of the House, steadfast guardian of the Eighth District of Massachusetts—passes as well. A dim note of dissonance marred the great man's leave-taking. "I love this body," the Speaker said in his valedictory, referring not to his own massive architecture but to the House of Representatives. "I leave with no rancor in my heart for anybody." Through its tears the Washington Establishment picked up the theme: its spokesman, Mr. George Will, announced that "partisanship without rancor" had always marked Tip's performances. In Washington, alas, recollection seldom reaches beyond last Sunday's *Post*. In fact the Speaker was an innovative polemicist, and among his colleagues his method has become the order of the day: any debate of public policy must begin and end with an inquiry into the opponent's moral life, and always the opponent must be judged wanting. Isn't this the Tip who once said of Ronald Reagan, "He has no concern, no regard, no care for the little man of America"? Who once warned the public that there "is evil in the [Reagan] White House," that "it's sinful that this man is president. . . . He's cold, he's mean, he's got ice water for blood"? Who once decided that the President could hardly wait to send young American men to die in Central America? If this be civility let rancor rule, now that Tip is gone.

•For reasons never fully explained, President Reagan hurriedly packed his bags at the beginning of the month and traveled to Iceland, whence he returned three days later more puzzled than before. In London, Mr. Jeffrey Wells, manager of that city's widely appreciated Free Expression Dance Team, stood trial for "indecently assaulting" Miss Penelope Martin, one of his more promising *danseurs*. According to testimony at the trial, Mr. Wells invited Miss Martin to his Gloucester Road flat and "forced her to watch an episode of the television series 'Dynasty' while she was topless." In his defense, Mr. Wells said he found the show "trivial and boring," his own attempts to spice it up notwithstanding. Supply-side thinking has finally taken root in West Germany, where unionized prostitutes complained that excessive government regulation invades their privacy and cuts into profit margins. In Pahute Mesa, Nevada, Prof. Carl Sagan was arrested for trespassing. Hours before a scheduled twenty-kiloton nuclear test, the turtle-necked sage was found "vigiling" within the danger zone at the test site, whereupon he was quickly hauled away by police, who obviously didn't think things through. At Disneyland, Mr. Lee Jack Eric Jacques, 21, of Redondo Beach, California, was arrested for fondling Miss Minnie Mouse, 59, during a heated *pas de deux* on the dance floor of the Disneyland disco.

•In Stockholm, vandals did unspecified damage to the grave of the martyred Olof Palme, and the infallible *New York Post* reported that Miss Amy Carter has dyed her hair and eyebrows black. The *San Francisco Chronicle* went the *Post* one better by quoting Mrs. Rosalynn Carter to the effect that this tonsorial experiment doesn't quite work from an aesthetic point of view, or, more specifically, that "it looks as if she put black shoe polish on her head. . . . Why, with her white skin, she looks like a witch." In other news from the clan, Mr. Jimmy Carter showed he hasn't lost the common touch when he walked into a Wendy's restaurant in northern Michigan and, according to wire reports, "ordered a hamburger, salad and a milkshake, paid the $3.20 tab and sat down to eat." One eyewitness said that "the visit created total chaos," which will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard Jimmy drink a milkshake through a straw.

•Progressive Sweden at last reached the furthest frontier of egalitarianism with the arrest by Stockholm police of an unnamed woman on charges of rape, and in Rome thirty-three Brazilian transvestites reacted kittenishly to their arrest by beating five Italian cops senseless and destroying the Villa Glori stationhouse's television set. The Taiwanese government announced in Taipei that it was lifting martial law after a brief but enjoyable thirty-seven years. And on Manhattan's famed Park Avenue, Mr. Dan Rather, the clarion voice of the CBS Evening News, was approached by two well-dressed gentlemen who asked him the direct if slightly cryptic question, "Kenneth, what is the frequency?" When Mr. Rather pretended ignorance his two interlocutors pretended he was a soccer ball.

•Not counting Mr. Carter's performance at Wendy's salad bar, October was a banner month for vegetables. The state legislature of New Jersey passed a resolution naming the tomato that state's official vegetable, despite strong support for two close runners-up—the delicious cucumber and Prof. George F. Kennan, now being kept at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study. The talented Gancarz brothers, Robert and Edward, of Jacobstown, New Jersey, wowed the gardening world by growing a 671-pound pumpkin and a 595-pound squash, respectively. Among juniors, the sixteen-year-old Miss Michele Gangnes, of Talent, Oregon, unearthed a ninety-pound gourd nurtured under her care. A justifiably proud Mr. Ken Aycliffe announced that he had nursed a fledgling carrot to the length of 118 inches, not including the fuzzy little green part on the top, in a drain-pipe in Talgarth, Wales. And Miss Bobbie Cherelle was crowned Miss Lima Bean at a vegetative saturnalia in Cape May, New Jersey, whereupon she announced, "I want to bridge the gap between people and the lima bean."

•The coy M. François Mitterrand declared that he might seek another term as Premier of France in 1988, and then again he might not. With characteristic languor the entertainment industry noted the passing of Mr. Candido Jacuzzi, whose invention forty years ago of the soporific device that bears his name rendered the casting couch obsolete. At the age of 71 Mr. Simon Argevitch, a lady's shoe salesman from Oakland, California, passed away. Mr. Argevitch picked up extra cash and much fame—"The Tonight Show," "I've Got a Secret," the works—by his singular willingness to stuff his mouth with several lit cigars and kitchen utensils while whistling "When the Saints Go Marching In." According to acquaintances, Mr. Argevitch had been in decline since reaching a personal best of seventeen cigars in 1982. In Athens, surgeons removed a 4.4 pound hairball from the stomach of Mrs. Kobra Bijani, who is pregnant. Dr. Ibrahim Shademan told United Press International that the operation was essential if Mrs. Bijani hopes to litter successfully.

•From Manhattan comes news that the famous hair designer, Mr. Kenneth, has at an alarming rate been losing celebrity clients—among them Jacqueline Onassis and Pat Buckley—to a rival hairstylist. How many clients and at precisely what rate they are defecting remains unreported, probably because no journalist has yet worked up the nerve to ask, "Kenneth, what is the frequency?" Mr. Darrell Lafon's "Grease and Go Fast-lube" in downtown Des Moines, Iowa, saw a gratifying increase in business when Mr. Lafon hired two topless women to clean his customers' windows while he lubes their undercarriages. Customs officials in Baltimore impounded 84,755 "witch's hats" from Taiwan. Now what is Amy supposed to do for headgear? Mr. William Hollingsworth, the notorious "elbow-biter" of Lorain, Ohio, was apprehended after claiming his second victim, this time a woman who exposed her luscious funny bone to Mr. Hollingsworth as she was making a call at a phone booth. Mr. Hollingsworth was fined $100 and sentenced to ten days in the Lorain hoosegow.

•The Soviet Union's first "All-Union Break Dance Festival" was held in Estonia, and an unidentified dump truck released 500 gallons of lard onto Beverlywood Street in Los Angeles. Dr. Martin Spector of Philadelphia was charged with stealing five human heads in violation of the law, not to mention good taste. Although he is technically

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an ear, nose, and throat man, Dr. Spector apparently found it more convenient to deal with the whole package. Mr. Erik Estrada, the actor, revealed to a horror-stricken writer from *People* magazine that he wears around his neck a glass locket containing his daughter's umbilical cord, which may explain why he hasn't appeared on television for several years. Finally, in Santa Clara, California, Miss Vicki Ann Guest, a senior at Fountain Valley High School, filed suit against her school district when she was told she could not join the school's cheerleading squad "because her breasts were too large." Miss Guest is asking for damages of $1 million, or $500,000 per. Her mother told reporters that the decision caused her daughter to think "that her body was wrong," a gross misapprehension that could easily be corrected by a few hours on the day shift at the "Grease and Go." —*A.F.*

CORRESPONDENCE

Some Have It

To live in Los Angeles, work in the movie business, and read Ben Stein on both, is to be compelled to believe in parallel universes. Stein writes so well, is so widely published, and (apparently) widely believed that it's a bewildering and humbling experience to spend days and nights in the world he describes so vividly without ever recognizing the wonderfully exotic people and folkways his readers love.

This time he's given us what could be called "Gentlewoman's Agreement" ("The Bad Girls of Gamma Nu," *TAS*, October 1986), an updating of the picture that once starred Gregory Peck and detailed the "hidden" anti-Semitism of the grey-flannel, country-club world as revealed to an innocent, high-principled eastern Wasp who disguises himself as one of *them*. This time the action is confined to the sorority women of USC and the high-minded Wasp is (natch) a high-spirited young woman. Otherwise, it's what used to be called "a haircut" on the old Laura Z. Hobson novel and the 20th Century Fox movie. By confining the action, of course, you bring the budget down and by changing all the personnel to nubile young women—hey, you don't have to hit me over the head, fellas.

Come on, now—are you going to tell me there's no anti-Semitism at USC? Well then! All right, it seems an awful lot more like the forties than the eighties, so what? When something works, don't fool with it. You know what Sam Briskin used to say—"don't improve it into a flop!" It's a natural Movie of the Week—CBS would do it sort of high-minded, NBC would want to push the personal tragedy a little more—you know, maybe somebody could commit suicide? But ABC—hey, turn it loose in that Sorority House with all those Phi Beta Cupcakes!

Stein's world is full of absolutely marvelous young women, ripe and willing as those individually wrapped fruits in the N. Beverly Drive window of Jurgensen's. They are all so willing, so fey, so wonderfully vulnerable, so—so naive and knowing. And they all just open like flowers to Ben Stein. What a gift he must have. The people I know never even *meet* those girls. Even my friends who can afford the restaurants Ben writes about, the clothing stores he seems to frequent—they read Stein with awe and envy. It's the world we all know—but it's absolutely unfamiliar.

Am I suggesting that Stein makes it up? Certainly not. It's surely a parallel universe—just like in the sci-fi yarns. We're all agreed on that and, what's more, we're all agreed that Stein's universe is more fun than ours. We have spent lots of time wondering where the "doorway" might be.

Probably it's not in Los Angeles at all. More likely the way into Stein's universe is in Washington or New York. There is, after all, an uncanny resemblance between Stein's Hollywood and that undying pre-WWII dream of "The Coast" which was born in New York and flourishes even today in print. It's a vision so potent, such a mixture of the contemptible and the irresistible that it continues to pour off the presses and into the magazines and best-seller lists. People who live in the Hollywood in which my friends and I live and work have long ago bought that vision—and those of us who write know that it's the only vision that sells. If you don't believe me, ask Jackie Collins. Or, if your plane is higher, Ben Stein. Or *TAS*, apparently.

Finally, a question. Stein's credits now have expanded to comprise "writer, producer, and movie actor." The writer is self-evident, the acting credit comes from a bit in a recent Kid Hit, but what's the producing credit for? My friends, many of whom are producers of movies and TV shows, don't seem to know. I hasten to say we don't doubt the credit—not in a time when a friendly hairdresser is as likely to be credited as not. But we wonder. Wistfully, we wonder whether Stein is the David O. Selznick of that other, better place?

Answers will be kept confidential.

Sincerely, with awe and envy,

—*Saul David*
Van Nuys, California

Ben Stein replies:

I sympathize with Mr. David's difficulty in meeting cute girls. Perhaps if he were less sarcastic and suspicious he would have better luck.

Smoking and Reviewing

I was disappointed in Ernest van den Haag's review of *Smoking and Society* (*TAS*, October 1986). As one of the authors in the volume, I am naturally interested in seeing it promoted. Yet my disappointment has little to do with the fact that the book was not favorably reviewed, but rather with the fact that it was not reviewed at all.

The reader of this review learns nothing about what is contained in the book. The authors of only three of the essays are mentioned. And only in the case of the Eysenck essay does the reader get the slightest inkling of what the essay contains. Even here van den Haag misreads the thesis: Eysenck does not exactly argue that there is no evidence of risk from smoking, but rather that the methodology used in gathering that evidence is seriously flawed. As to the Buchanan and Berger essays which are deemed "interesting" but not "original or profound," the reader is given no idea about what could be interesting about essays that are neither original nor profound. What is even more amazing is that van den Haag makes Berger's and Buchanan's conclusions his own but without the element of "interesting."

Indeed, virtually everything van den Haag has to say that is plausible is contained in the volume itself. But the reader is given the impression that the ideas expressed in the review are absent from the volume. What other impression could there be when a reviewer presents the ideas as his own insights?

Why complain to the *Spectator* and not van den Haag himself? Perhaps because a review like this should have been returned by the editors for rewriting. Then again, maybe I'm wrong to believe that book reviews should deal with the book one is asked to review. —*Douglas J. Den Uyl*
Louisville, Kentucky

Ernest van den Haag replies:

A review should not be an abstract but a critical appraisal. Had I abstracted each essay my review would have been as boring and chaotic as the volume itself. Reviewing disparate essays on civil liberties, medical evidence, taxes, "Psychological Determinants of Smoking Behavior," "A Sociological View of the Anti-Smoking Phenomenon," or "The Economic Contribution of the Tobacco Industry," one does best to discuss the general ideas which can be extracted or are relevant. Anyway the best I could do with Mr. Den Uyl's contribution was not to mention it, since it does not contain anything not obvious. (So with some others.) I am sorry that he does not appreciate what was meant as a kindness.

I agree with Mr. Den Uyl about Eysenck's essay. So did my review. However, contrary to Mr. Den Uyl's idea, an essay may be "interesting" without being "original or profound." Berger's and Buchanan's are. Surely Immanuel Kant was original and profound but his expositors (or his self-popularizations) need not be, while yet interesting. Nor does a guide to Transylvania or Washington have to be original and profound to be interesting.

As for the scurrilous claim that I make Berger's and Buchanan's conclusions my own without proper credit, after rereading I am not at all sure to what conclusions Mr. Den Uyl refers since I did not discuss the topics Berger and Buchanan discuss. At any rate, my views on smoking and minorities were on record long before I set eyes on the compilation I reviewed. I suspect I was asked to review it because my interest and record were known. That some of the contributors agree with me is as unsurprising as it is gratifying. Unfortunately, it does not make *Smoking and Society* less dull.

Maneuvers

At a time when most military men are woefully ignorant of the rudiments of the art of war, Mary C.N. McConnell may be forgiven for the difficulty she experienced in trying to understand "maneuver warfare" (Review of Gary Hart and William S. Lind's *America Can Win*, *TAS*, October 1986). "Maneuver warfare," because it is a "style" of warfare rather than a doctrine, is difficult to reduce to words. The Great Captains who practiced it never managed to distill its essence into a set of rules. Neither the German Army of the first half of this century nor the Israeli Self-Defense Force of the past forty years, both of which institutions fostered a disproportionate number of leaders who practiced "maneuver warfare," ever came up with a name for "maneuver warfare" or for any of its subsets. This lack of vocabulary presents a number of problems to writers such as Mr. Lind whose attempts to explain "maneuver warfare" are limited by the inherent clumsiness of language. It is no accident that the names used by historians to describe particular instances of "maneuver warfare"—"blitzkrieg," "infiltration tactics," and "von Hutier tactics"—were coined by journalists.

What is more difficult to excuse in Miss McConnell's review is her misrepresentation of many of the opinions expressed by Senator Hart and Mr. Lind. It is incorrect to state, for example, that they are opposed to precision guided munitions (PGMs). Rather, they support the use of some PGMs while rejecting the employment of others. In the same vein, Hart and Lind are not advocates of "low tech" warfare. Again, they oppose some technologies and support others. Their criterion for favoring or not favoring a weapon is not its cost or complexity but rather its track record. They respect, for example, the effectiveness of the $100,000 Exocet while denigrating the $4,000 Dragon.

—*Bruce I. Gudmundsson*
Medford, Massachusetts

Mary C.N. McConnell replies:

I almost hate to reply when Mr. Gudmundsson has so eloquently confirmed my statement that military reformers "actively resist" answering the question "what does maneuver warfare mean in practice?" It is of course difficult for anyone—whether seasoned military man or lady writer—to understand a concept that cannot be put into words. But put into words it must be, if maneuver warfare is to become the U.S. military's new doctrine. More specifically, its advocates must demonstrate how a maneuver approach would better meet some specific military challenges: winning the war in Vietnam (my example), or defending Western Europe. Some reformers, Steven Canby for one, have attempted such explanations. Messrs. Hart and Lind do not.

While the authors do not advocate scrapping all precision guided munitions, Mr. Gudmundsson would surely agree that they are generally skeptical of the expensive, "smart" new weapons technologies. "Men," in their own words, "are still smarter than machines."

But the issue, as I tried to point out in my review, is not just whether today's smart weapons perform as hoped. Many do not, and the reformers have done their country a service in forcing the military to acknowledge this. The more difficult issue is whether, and how far, we should pursue the military possibilities opened up by the computer revolution. Here "track record" is of only limited use. After all, if nations had developed weapons solely on the basis of track record, we would still be throwing stones. □

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EDITORIALS

REAGAN REMOTE

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Historians set out to define the epochs of the past. Successful statesmen define the present. Ronald Reagan has made historic changes in policy and contributed to a vast change in the national mood away from pessimism and passivity toward optimism and self-reliance. He has, however, only fitfully defined the present. In domestic policy and in foreign policy he has allowed muddle to reign. Had the Great Communicator defined the national purpose more vividly he would not have been so painfully used as he was in Reykjavik. The world would have realized that the 1980s marks the dawn of strategic defense against nuclear aggression.

Of course, pol that he is, Ronald Reagan has usually benefited from muddle. By encouraging ambiguous interpretations of his deeds he has enervated his critics. By failing to illuminate his goals he has hobbled them with doubt and confusion. Though his break with the old order is as momentous as Franklin Roosevelt's, this President has masterfully scotched controversy. Many of his friends have gone down in flames, but not the President.

Yet perhaps there are also benefits to be realized from clarifying one's goals. The muddle that Ronald Reagan courts has given his critics more influence in defining the issues of the day than they deserve. They have been able to insist that arms control is the goal of our time, though since March of 1983 the President's goal has most certainly been national security through "deep" strategic cuts and through the assured security of the Strategic Defense Initiative as opposed to Mutual Assured Destruction, the nuclear nightmare that has been the inspiration for so many decades of cheap art and puerile oratory.

Supply-side economics was a commonplace economic concept. Yet the President realized that repeatedly he would have to enunciate the connection between tax cuts and economic growth to make it a theme of the 1980s. Strategic defense is immensely more complicated, yet until his October 14 post-Reykjavik address the President never had given a nationally televised speech devoted to the Strategic Defense Initiative. His original 1983 SDI proposal was tacked on to a statement on the MX missile. Thereafter he maneuvered in muddle. He allowed it to appear that SDI was negotiable for large cuts in the Soviet missile arsenal. As late as the week before his Reykjavik rendezvous the President was stressing that deployment of SDI was negotiable, encouraging many to doubt his devotion to strategic defense.

Through all the ambiguity that has confused the SDI debate the President has failed to make his goals clear, thus giving his critics unwarranted influence in defining his goals and SDI's problems. That is why in early October Congressman Jack Kemp and writer Gregory Fossedal mustered a range of SDI supporters both to publicize that recent technological advances make limited deployment of SDI feasible soon and to encourage the President to remain resolute on behalf of SDI at Reykjavik. The range of SDI supporters was broad, including such illustrious names as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, and Jeane Kirkpatrick. The President had failed to define a major theme of his administration and it fell to these and to others outside the White House to defend the strategic concept of the 1980s, defense.

The President's failure in Reykjavik illuminated a far greater failure, one that will surely impair Ronald Reagan's impact on history. He does not support those who support him. When he pushed back from the conference table at Reykjavik for the last time, having finally impressed at least Mikhail Gorbachev of his devotion to SDI, he was absolutely alone. Even in conferring with his advisers in Iceland it seems he was practically the lone champion of SDI. The mystery of Ronald Reagan is why he is so often alone. He is the leader of a new political consensus, embracing old conservatives and liberals, but he does not work with them. Possessed of a deeply held set of political beliefs and fortified by the magnificent courage that allowed him to overcome all the treachery in Reykjavik, he remains always alone.

This undoubtedly allows him greater political freedom, but it weakens his capacity to define the present and to prefigure the future. Ronald Reagan's aloofness has enfeebled the champions of his policies outside the Administration, and when this mysterious man retires they will have more difficulty assuring that the legacy of Ronald Reagan endures than they should. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.

FAITH IN THE SYSTEM

Though the rest of the nation remains insouciant to its every lurid detail, in the august purlieus of Washington a ghostly controversy now whirls about the name of Faith Ryan Whittlesey; and as is so frequently true its perpetrators have got it all wrong. Nonetheless, they have performed a public service. I now realize that last spring Mrs. Whittlesey took me to the cleaners.

Mrs. Whittlesey, our Ambassador to Switzerland, has fallen victim to recent black cat news stories. A black cat news story is a Washington specialty, a news story—usually inaccurate—that is flung across the path of a public figure to scare the hell out of him and to haunt forever his career, making him "controversial" at least and badly shaken. Thus the black cat news story is not strictly speaking a piece of news. It is not written to inform readers but to manipulate them into useful indignation.

The black cat news stories that have suddenly blighted the path of Ambassador Whittlesey were confected by a bevy of State Department fuddyduddies. In their smallness they envy her ability to run a proper embassy. What is more, they disapprove of her pro-Administration positions on Central America and the Strategic Defense In-

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itiative. Most foreign service officers are of modest means. When one is made an ambassador it is rare that he has the resources or contacts to put together a proper "representational" or promotional fund. Politically appointed ambassadors such as Mrs. Whittlesey can, and so in keeping with the pettiness of our era many at the State Department want to prohibit such funds.

To further this noble purpose they hornswoggled an artless *Washington Post* reporter into creating the aforementioned black cat news stories abounding with spectacles of Mrs. Whittlesey's intrigue and extravagance. Extravagance, my hoof. As the redoubtable *Post* reported in October, I was one of the reputed beneficiaries of the Ambassador's largesse. But the poor reporter did not know the half of it. I now do, and according to my calculations Ambassador Whittlesey owes me an apology plus a check for $155.18.

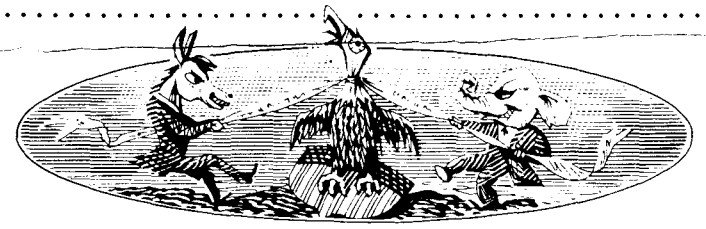
Before reading the *Post*, I did not know that she had raised a representational fund of "at least" $83,000. Moreover, I thought I was rather special when she asked me to visit her in Switzerland "the next time you are in Europe." She had purchased fifty copies of my latest book, so I thought she admired my art. Now the *Post* reports that I was but one of dozens of individuals—for instance businessmen and pols—whom she lured to Switzerland, and she got me in the off season! Once I was there she admitted that she had bought my book "to explain the 1984 election to the Swiss." With $83,000 she could have bought a lot more books. There have to be more than fifty Swiss in need of them.

Truth be known, the two days I spent with Ambassador Whittlesey were arduous beyond the limits of the tolerable. When I travel in Europe life begins at 8:00 p.m. Mornings are spent *endormi*, and I speak only for my usual fee. Ambassador Whittlesey had me up at dawn's first light. She ruined two dinners by demanding that I speak, once to a polyglot crowd in a place called St. Gallen and once in Zurich at the elegant Dolder Hotel, where I was confronted by the Swiss press. On one unhappy morn, she forced me to hike for four hours up and down the inclines of scenic Appenzell with its governor as they talked of trade and dairy products. (I was photographed with a cow—my camera!) There is nothing I willingly do for four hours straight, save sleep.

After all this she insisted that I owed her $155.18 for telephone charges. She had cozened me into giving free lectures in a mountainous country, mostly at my expense, and she would not even pick up the bill when I called my office for sympathy. I hope she treated her other guests more considerately. If news stories are to be believed, Attorney General Meese and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle got to see the inside of our embassy. She kept me on the road for two days.

I suppose Mrs. Whittlesey's fund sounded very sensational to our innocent reporter, but it had been examined and approved by the State Department, as were all contributions to it. That is the custom with such funds. The whole controversy puts me in mind of those lurid 1981 news stories of how Nancy Reagan talked patriots into buying new White House china. Again, no illegality was ever committed. The State Department fuddyduddies used a simple reporter much as Ambassador Whittlesey used me, admittedly in the national interest. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



CROSS CURRENTS

by Tom Bethell

I was at JFK Airport en route to a London conference on British taxation when news of the successful conclusion to the Reykjavik summit came over the airwaves. A television screen in the Eastern Airlines terminal showed a scowling Peter Jennings in a raincoat, crossly cross-examining a succession of witnesses, for all the world as though he were legal counsel to Mikhail Gorbachev. So automatically do media people these days take the Soviet side that I am sure Jennings had no idea he came across this way.

My first impression was disappointment that I would miss the media postmortems in the following week. Poor old Lou Cannon of the *Washington Post* must be in a terrible tizzy, I thought. The White House correspondent has signed on to do a big biography of Ronald Reagan after he leaves office, and *this*, one suspects, is, in the imagination of Lou Cannon, the "verdict of history" that now supposedly animates Reagan's every decision. Meanwhile, of course, Cannon has campaigned tirelessly in the paper's news columns to get Reagan to make correct, history-approved decisions here and now—an arms control agreement with the Soviets being high on the agenda.

Now Jennings in his London Fog was telling us that Pupil Reagan had neglected to take the advice of Tutor Cannon, who would have to resume his Sisyphean editorial task all over again, no doubt with increased petulance and exasperation.

"Talks Are A Gamble For Soviet Leader," the *Washington Post* had tendentiously informed us on the day the summit was announced: this from the paper that complains about disinformation campaigns. Clearly it was a gamble for Reagan. I looked forward (and still look forward) to an explanation of how Gorbachev, having gambled in Reykjavik and come away empty-handed, is in trouble back home—perhaps under fire from *Pravda* for refusing to accept Reagan's generous offers. According to this October 1 *Washington Post* story (by Gary Lee in Moscow), by going to Iceland Gorbachev was "demonstrating his willingness to counter those critics in both Washington and Moscow who want to block a rapprochement between the two superpower leaders." He gave us no clue as to the identity of such Moscow critics. Those in Washington presumably would include Howard Phillips, Richard Viguerie, the editorial staff of *Human Events*, and conceivably Patrick J. Buchanan of the White House.

But I must hurry on to London, leaving until later an exposition of the point that the so-called "arms control process" is a total fraud, does not result in a reduction of arms but an increase thereof, and is not even intended to reduce such arms. Its real but unstated purpose is to subject U.S. military procurement to Soviet consent. The only problem is that President Reagan doesn't seem to realize this. (Maybe he does, privately. In which case he's playing a risky game.)

The London Conference on Taxes and Growth, sponsored by the Manhattan Institute and the Adam Smith Institute, was a useful exercise in supply-side imperialism. So many Britons have for so many years come to America preaching the gospel of soggy progressivism that it was indeed a pleasure for a dozen of us to give them some *sound* advice in return: the British must cut their tax rates if they are not to sink totally beneath the waves they once ruled.

I traveled from Gatwick to Victoria Station with Jim Gwartney, a professor at Florida State University, and the author (with Rick Stroup) of one of the few sensible economics textbooks. He commented as we rattled along through the London suburbs that you could tell from the buildings visible from the railway that England enjoyed a period of great prosperity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, extending perhaps through the 1930s. Thereafter, the architecture suggested, not much development had occurred in the country.

The architectural indicators are probably fairly reliable, reflecting political history. In 1945 Clement Attlee's Labour government was elected, whereupon the creation of wealth was subordinated to its distribution. And until Margaret Thatcher was elected in 1979, all conservative governments since 1945 have accepted in principle the postwar socialist advances. Only

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now, with Britain no longer Great, and exposed to the competition of world-wide market forces, is change being forced upon a reluctant British establishment; an establishment which would very much prefer to go on doing things in the same old way.

Once internationalized, market forces turn out to be extremely powerful, and advance slowly but surely, as though driven by Historical Necessity. As George Gilder pointed out in his talk, capital now moves at the speed of light from one country to another. The barriers (in the form of police-state regulations) needed to prevent this propensity of capital to seek out hospitable accommodations are extraordinarily expensive to erect. For this reason, capitalistic advance is difficult to reverse in a democracy.

Put another way, if the British don't cut their top income tax rates, now reaching 60 percent on what we think of as middle incomes, then discretionary capital will be dispatched by computer to New York or Hong Kong. The people also will leave. Just as prices in competing businesses tend to approach the lowest price set by the most efficient producer, so in the international arena the "prices" charged by various governments will tend to fall to the level established by the most competitive country. By 1988 this will be the United States, where the top tax rate will be 28 percent. Tax rates correspond to the price of government. (Notice that tax rates, both in England and the U.S., are the price of *working*, not the price of living, in either country: if you want to live without working, the government pays you.) In other words, the electronic transmission of capital has indeed brought to pass an imperialistic capitalism. The left was right about that, and there isn't a whole lot they can do about it.

Alan Reynolds of Polyconomics, who spoke at the conference, had some new figures showing just how high tax rates are in almost all European countries; not just on high incomes, but (taking into account social security and value-added taxes) on income levels as moderate as $28,000. "Even tax systems with the highest marginal tax rates are not significantly 'progressive,' " he noted. "They are simply confiscatory of any additional income, regardless of what a family earns to begin with." The confiscated percentage of an additional dollar earned ranges from 72 to 84 percent in Belgium; 66 to 76 percent in the Netherlands; and 87 to 92 percent in Sweden. "What Europe's high marginal tax rates at all income levels accomplish is simply an effective barrier against upward mobility," Reynolds said.

This was a point I made, although less scientifically. The mystery to explain is why the Conservative party has been so reluctant to reduce tax rates below 60 percent. One explanation of course is that Mrs. Thatcher has been so ill-advised by Treasury officials that the Tory leadership really believes that a reduction of rates will reduce revenues, thereby opening up a frightening budget deficit. In fact, as was also pointed out at the conference, the percentage share of revenue paid by upper-income earners has increased in England by about ten percent since the top tax rate was cut (from 83 to 60 percent in 1979).

One surmises that the Tories are dedicated to keeping the current tax code for some other reason. My guess is that at some instinctive level the Tories have figured out that high tax rates prevent social mobility and they don't object to this, reckoning it to be in the "class interest" of their constituents in the shires. Barriers to class mobility by the same token "lock in" the present apportionment of wealth in the country. Those at the top get to stay at the top. How can a member of the middle class, with (at least) 60 percent of his additional income intercepted at source, compete with someone whose

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- Ⓥ **Margaret Mead:** *How People Change* (25 min.)
- Ⓦ **Robert Frost:** *An Evening with Robert Frost* (55 min.)
- Ⓧ **Stephen Spender:** *T.S. Eliot and George Orwell* (41 min.)
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country estate, London house, and antiques therein were purchased at a time of moderate taxation? That a Marxian tax code achieves the opposite of what Marx had in mind should be regarded as one more illustration of the Law of Unintended Consequences.

Andrew Neil of the *Sunday Times* chaired a panel and subsequently wrote a good editorial on the British tax problem, but my sense was that not many people in England (certainly not many journalists) have any real grasp of these matters. There is no British counterpart to the U.S. supply-side movement, which consists mostly of enthusiastic amateurs, journalists, and political economists attuned to the public-policy debate rather than to their academic peers. Certainly the British have no one in the same league as Gilder, Reynolds, Warren Brookes, Richard Rahn, or Bruce Bartlett, to name five who were at the conference. (Lord Bauer is an exception, and he's Hungarian by birth.)

One reason is that a prosperous private sector is needed to sustain a vigorous policy debate outside government circles. The one thing you can be sure that a highly taxed government will *not* produce is a prosperous private sector. But perhaps more important, it is clear that the British Civil Service actively discourages the informed discussion of public policy outside its own ranks. Just as high tax rates prevent the emergence of business entrepreneurs, so the Civil Service monopoly has stifled the emergence of policy entrepreneurs comparable to those who have been so influential in U.S. public life in recent years.

The British Civil Service is very much the same as the U.S. Foreign Service, and the model for it. If you can imagine the U.S. Foreign Service in control of all departments of the U.S. government and arrogantly unresponsive to requests for government data, then you can imagine the magnitude of the British problem. The British Civil Service attracts top graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, who jealously guard the facts and figures indispensable to informed debate. For years U.S. supply-siders have tried to get the revenue figures for the different British tax brackets since the 1979 rate reduction, so far without success. The percentage changes mentioned above (supporting the Laffer Curve thesis) were only released after a request for the data was made, last May, by the Labour Member of Parliament for Birkenhead.

Before leaving England I met an old friend, Tony Thomas, now the business editor of the *Economist*. He told me that even when a Member of Parliament does request information the Civil Service will frequently "misconstrue" it or interpret it as narrowly as possible. He gave me lunch at the Reform Club, and it was interesting to visit this ornate creation of those early Victorian reformers, small *d* democrats who supported an extension of the franchise and broadly favored free markets. In a way they were the supply-siders of their day. I gather the Reform Club membership today is very much centrist—"wet" Tory, Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance, moderate Labour. They are not at all sympathetic to the contemporary reforms of Mrs. Thatcher, who is as opposed to privilege as were her reformist counterparts in the 1830s.

After lunch Tony Thomas showed me around, pointing out the gardener outside sweeping up leaves with a pipe in his mouth (no infernal combustion engine strapped to his back as in America, thank God), the large book-lined meeting rooms, the exhibit space with amusing letters to the club secretary from Bertrand Russell and Hilaire Belloc. What would the modern-day membership make of supply-side ideas, I wondered? My dear chap, they wouldn't know *what* you were talking about. Something to do with economics, eh? How boring. □

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Bryan F. Griffin

THE GREAT FEAR OF 1986

In which Winston Churchill and Dagwood Bumstead meet the King of the Slave Traders.

You are all familiar, are you not, with the Five Telltale Symptoms of Diabetes? We won't ask for a show of hands, this time, but if there are any offensively healthy Americans in the room who have not yet memorized the latest symptoms, we'd like to suggest—soon we will be insisting upon—a quick trip to the corner drugstore. You'll find an official wall poster there—it's the one with the threatening red headline asking the musical question, Do You Have Diabetes?—and there will be a perspiring pack of your fellow citizens gathered anxiously in front of it, memorizing telltale symptoms. Join them. And do get a move on, my lambs, or you'll have to bite your way through the rush-hour crowds of worried middle-aged gentlemen waiting in line for a chance to test themselves on the Check Your Blood Pressure Here machine (and you *have* checked that blood pressure today, haven't you?).

On second thought, don't get a move on: the crisis control center has just received an urgent communication from the front reminding us that "up to eight rear-end collisions happen every minute!" Scary enough for you? (And don't you like that "up to"?) Hey, this isn't just another routine memo, cupcakes, this is a direct order: "Don't Be In One Of Them!" The latest warning comes, not so incidentally, from the HQ of a mammoth chain of Socially Conscious department stores: the high command wants to sell us whimsical little gadgets for our automobiles that will free us all from the debilitating fear of Costly Damage, High Insurance Rates, and Disabling Whiplash, forever and ever. So do your duty, honchos: "Prevent Dangerous Accidents!" And *don't worry*, okay?

Drive carefully, but do try to make it back alive by seven o'clock at the very latest. That will give us time to get through that crucial issue of *Life* magazine—"Now No One Is Safe From AIDS"—before the curtain rises on tonight's television fare (and don't forget: no American, anywhere, is excused from television duty, ever). We thought we'd start out with that Jogging Injuries special on Channel 7, flip over to Channel 9 for the rebroadcast of the old favorite, "The Seven Warning Signals of Cancer," and still have time to catch five or six hours of this evening's AIDS orgy on the local public television station. If there's nothing drippier available we can always wrap up the evening with that "Nightline" thing from the American Broadcasting Company; surely that nice Mr. Koppel will be assuring us just one more time that Exposure To The Sun Can Kill Us, or that Statistics Show that nine out of ten Americans may be dead someday. So that'll give us six or seven solid hours of good worrying time before morning. Sound good to you?

Bryan F. Griffin is the author of Panic Among the Philistines.

And oh, before you leave for the drugstore, just one more thing: Buckle Up, cookie. We Care. And—increasingly—It's The Law.

Do you know how many Americans die in their bathtubs each year? Did you know that most accidents happen within thirty miles of the home? Do you have smoke alarms in your place of residence? Fire extinguishers? Poison control kits? (It's The Law, you know.) Have you thought—long and hard—about what it's going to feel like to die from the effects of radioactive fallout? Are you quite sure you don't already have the disease of the month—Alzheimer's or dyslexia, herpes or leprosy? (Bet you have them all; bet everybody you know has them, too.) Is there a history of heart disease in your family? Mental illness? Do you suffer from . . . ? Do you know how to tell if you have . . . ? Hey, how long has it been since you had a physical checkup anyway? Have you Waited Too Long? What's your Cholesterol Count? And what will happen to you if you lose your job next year? How will you support yourself during that long, long old age you're planning? Will you end up in a lovely nursing home or in one of those horrid dungeons As Seen On Television? And *who's* going to pay your bills after you're dead? How can you sleep at night, you brute, with all your problems?

Oh, look at the brethren, then, in the house of liberty and the home of the brave: buckled up, helmeted and sealed, walking the anxious line, chanting the never-ending chants in honor of the Seven Warning Signals of this and the Sixteen Hidden Symptoms of that, feeling themselves here and poking themselves there, studying every imperfection in the mirror and wondering if This Is It, fighting for a piece of territory in the crowded waiting room of the national hospital, keeping their eyes peeled for a thousand different dooms and a million possible inconveniences, surrounded on every side by nuclear winters and Libyan terrorists and Joggers' Knees and Stress and Burn Out and Other People's Cigarette Smoke and the possibility of Injury And Loss—and by the way do you have sufficient Renters' Insurance and Homeowners' Insurance and Life Insurance and Liability Insurance and Credit Card Insurance and Automobile Insurance and Marine Insurance and Health Insurance and special policies to cover random Acts Of God and Catastrophe and cancer and dentistry and pregnancy and pain?—surrounded on every side, we say again, by the possibility of Something Going Wrong, by the possibility of sorrow, of hurt, of poverty, of tribulation, the possibility of . . . the possibility of life, and death.

That's the core of the panic, one suspects: the fear of death. In-

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deed all timidity—all shrinking from the vicissitudes of life, all moral cowardice, all insecurity—may be traced to that one elemental fear; which is in itself a consequence of guilt and unacknowledged shame, the constant companion of a frivolous life.

When these most pathetic heirs of the wild frontier warn themselves not to Drink And Drive, they do so not out of a conventional regard for moral conduct or "self-respect" or social responsibility or God; they do so out of an exaggerated regard for the authority of death. And when the adolescent generation is called into the national auditorium to receive yet another warning about the dangers of drunkenness and drug addiction—sorry, that should be "substance abuse"—the appeal will not be to what we used to call The Better Instincts, not to youthful hopes of someday doing one's part in the world, or the embryonic standards of right and wrong; but to cowardice. There will be parades of wheelchairs, and hideous photographs of brain-damaged classmates, and little melodramas set in graveyards; and so the parental fear of death and disability is handed on, ever so self-righteously, to the innocents; and lo, unprepared for such a poisonous gospel, the children turn—ever so naturally—to bigger and better drugs.

And why on earth not? What better defense do the babes have against the encroaching fogs of institutionalized terror? Never have they heard a voice telling them just *why* their horrid little lives are so worthy of undiscriminating preservation; never have they seen a vision of a future based on anything finer than the worship of mere existence—incessant, dreary *living*—and the perpetual fear of death; rarely if ever have they been permitted to listen to the voice of the prophet telling them that life is merely a means, not an end. If we wanted to speak with uncharacteristic roughness we might say that these dead-headed young rock and rollers were the very last gasp of a panic-stricken civilization bent on mere survival and nothing more, and we might say too that the civilization had asked for everything it was getting, in spades.

In a more polite mood we might note parenthetically that it is one of the distinguishing characteristics of well-meaning liberalism, and one of the primary reasons for its perpetual failure, that it always attacks the symptoms—in this case, a youthful tendency to intoxication—rather than the disease, which is almost always fear itself. Indeed no nation will ever make a dent in its "drug problem" until it stops staring at the consequences of the intoxicant and starts asking itself why so many of its working-class citizens prefer the passing glory of that intoxicant to the prospect of a constructive life. You will not save your children—from beer or dope or lust or money or the Red Army or atheism or AIDS or the Lifestyle Of The Rich And Famous or anything else—until you stop trying to scare them out of their britches and start telling them just what it is that they are being saved *for*.

Now it is at this point in the sermon that some earnest soul out there in television land—it's usually an assistant professor of sociology in eastern Long Island—is going to remind the congregation in tearful tones that diabetes does exist and that people do get maimed and that many of us are ill with this or that fatal disease and that Sunspots Can Kill. There is only one possible rejoinder to such a compassionate reminder, and it's not a graceful one, to wit: So what else is new? Listen, professor: we have even heard it claimed, in eccentric circles, that death and sorrow must come to all men; and surely that proposition would not have come as an enormous shock to the kids who charged with the Light Brigade at Balaklava, or to the millions of Europeans who succumbed to the Black Death in the fourteenth century, or to the simple Jews and Christians who were boiled alive during the Neronian persecutions; or indeed to any of our ancestors.

But we're *different* today, insists the assistant professor; we're *enlightened*: we have indoor plumbing and mutual funds and tapedecks and VCRs and subscriptions to *Esquire* and children to support, and it's just not *fair* for our Career Plans to be interrupted by Accident and Injury and Death. I mean my God this is the twentieth century and the idea of the necessity of pain and Death, Black or otherwise, is so . . . so *medieval*. The faculty club just spent five hundred bucks on a compact disc player from Bloomingdale's and now you tell me I'm going to *die*? It just can't happen, that's all. It's got to be stopped, do you hear me?

We hear you, as they say at Bloomie's. Still we do not quite see just why it is a more admirable or a better thing for a man to spend the waking and sleeping hours of a long lifetime worrying about and planning for the worst that can happen—only, perhaps, to be run over by that proverbial truck while preparing for Nuclear Winter—than for a much younger man to lose his head to a Russian saber on the plain of Balaklava. That is to say, what's the point? Indeed we see the point of Balaklava—though they chatter about Needless Death these days, a contradiction in terms if ever there was one—but see no point at all in the undirected life, perpetuating itself in a womb of false security, in defiance of its inevitable end.

Do you know how John Hooper died? It's not a pretty story, but one worth telling, in our present context. It's an old story, too: like so many others, Mr. Hooper found himself on the wrong side of the religious debate, just a few centuries ago—it doesn't matter which faction he sided with, now—and his fellow believers decided to burn him alive, in the spring of 1555.

According to Hooper's friend John Foxe, the ceremony didn't go smoothly. The wood was green, and there wasn't enough of it, so the first flames barely singed the prisoner. After a while some dry faggots were brought, and the fire relit: this time it did some damage to Mr. Hooper's legs and groin, but—"saving that it did burn his hair, and swell his skin a little"—it left the rest of the poor fellow intact. When the second fire had almost burned itself out, the prisoner wiped his eyes with both hands and called for more wood. "And all this while his nether parts did burn: for the faggots were so few, that the flame did not burn strongly at his upper parts."

So the third fire was kindled, and John Hooper spoke his last words, asking his God to have mercy on him. "But when he was black in the mouth, and his tongue swollen, that he could not speak, yet his lips went till they were shrunk to the gums: and he knocked his breast with his hands, until one of his arms fell off and then knocked still with the other, what time the fat, water, and blood, dropped out at his fingers' ends." So the fire was lit a fourth time; "and his hand did cleave fast, in knocking, to the iron upon his breast. . . . Thus was he three quarters of an hour or more in the fire. Even as a lamb, patiently he abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards, backwards, nor to any side: but he died as quietly as a child in his bed."

Makes the latest media hysterics about the dangers of sunburn to middle-aged socialites look just a little shabby, doesn't it? Of course the point of the horrible anecdote (for which sincere apologies are offered) is that John Hooper *chose* to die this most terrible death, at the age of sixty, rather than to speak the few innocuous words that would have freed him to enjoy another ten or twenty years of useful life. One might say that he, like the millions who have died equally brave deaths, had his priorities in order.

Now look at us, we Americans, we who spend our days checking ourselves for signs of Stress and Aging and Sexual Dysfunction, we who call ourselves "heroes" whenever we're taken hostage by disturbed Bedouins (and eight out of ten Americans will be taken hostage in their lifetimes), we who call ourselves "survivors" if we make it through a divorce trial in one piece; who among us is fit to lick John Hooper's boots?

Easy enough for you to say, cries the assistant prof, his sensitive features arranged in the familiar lines of academic compassion: you're young, and relatively undamaged. But how can we be so callous? How can we tell the old man who did *not* get his blood pressure and his cholesterol and his plumbing checked—and is suffering the physical consequences, confined to his wheelchair, perhaps—that he did the right thing? Has your reporter never known pain, or grief, or sickness? Has your reporter never known *suffering*? And the answer is: yes he has, and he'll know more of it before he's through, and so will you; though he is very aware of the fact, and very grateful for the fact, that—as with every other human—his narrow shaves have far outnumbered his actual tumbles (the remarkable thing is not that some of us get hurt but that any of us survives the first five seconds of life). In sum, your reporter is just as distressed as the next man when he hears of innocents being maimed and killed by faulty gas connections or malfunctioning arteries or psychopathic muggers or—everybody's pet—Corporate Carelessness.

So the professors must not misunderstand the message here. We believe in prudence, and temperance, and rational behavior, and personal responsibility, and we don't believe in tempting fate: it's a mistake for women wearing high heels to go running on well-polished floors, and it's a mistake for any of us to go bathing in pools of asbestos fibers if we can possibly avoid it (sometimes we can't, of course, especially if our host insists). But—here's that message we mentioned—it is a still greater mistake for the citizens of a

And do get a move on, my lambs, or you'll have to bite your way through the rush-hour crowds of worried middle-aged gentlemen waiting in line for a chance to test themselves on the Check Your Blood Pressure Here machine.

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great nation to spend their lifetimes *looking* for polished floors and pools of asbestos fibers to avoid. Tempting fate is risky; but trying to escape fate is—how shall we say it—always fatal. We may seal ourselves up tight, and repair all those faulty gas connections and replace all those tired arteries and execute all our psychopathic muggers and shut down all our Careless Corporations; and lo, death—even premature death—will still get through, through some crack in the technological barricade. And who will say then, that it was better to have "lived" scared and shriveled in the urban womb, than to have burned in glory like John Hooper?

"Man's amazing discoveries and inventions have failed to relieve him of sorrow. In some respects physical pain has been mitigated by advancing medical science, and increasing comforts have been placed at our disposal by scientific invention. At the same time, many of these inventions, such as airplanes and machinery of war, have probably brought a greater sum total of human misery to the world than ever existed in history. . . . Nor has scientific alleviation of physical pain meant any reduction in the place of man's most acute suffering, that of pain in the spirit. Not yet has been invented a gadget to take the anguish out of a human heart."

Do you know who said that? It was Norman Vincent Peale, of all people—not the Norman Vincent Peale of today, the popular prophet of Positive Thinking and Feeling Good About Yourself, but the Peale of fifty years ago, the earnest young clergyman struggling in the chaotic wake of the first Great War and the last Great Depression. That nifty gadget he was imagining—the one that would take the anguish out of the human heart—hasn't been invented yet, and it's no good pretending we've got it when we haven't. Which is to say that any prolonged attempt to escape the experience of living (and dying) is not only contemptible but futile. The evasive life is not really a life at all, but a preparation for life.

The bottom line here is one that was drawn with poetic efficiency by the Shropshire Lad himself, A. E. Housman, during the first public address he ever made. The thirty-three-year-old classicist was talking about the materialism of 1892 but he might just as well have been talking about the cowardice of 1986:

> Existence is not itself a good thing, that we should spend a lifetime securing its necessaries; a life spent, however victoriously, in securing the necessaries of life is no more than an elaborate furnishing and decoration of apartments for the reception of a guest who is never to come.

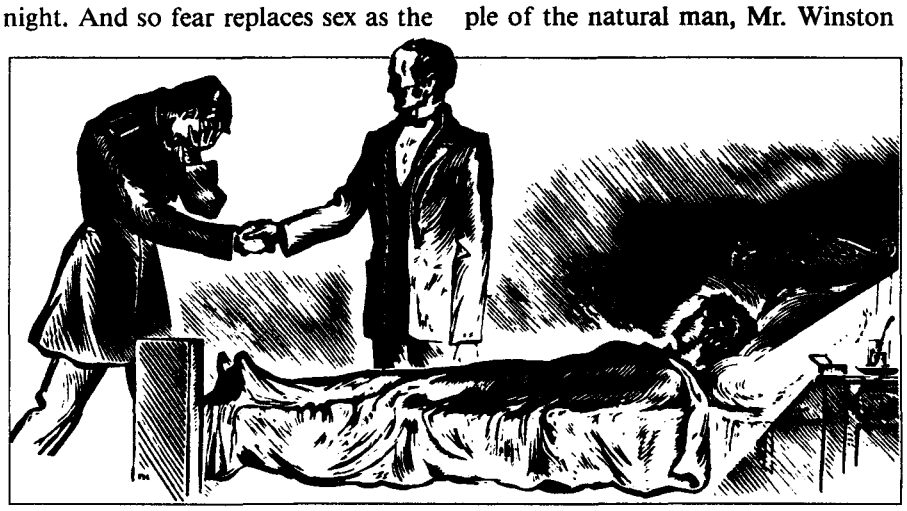
Surely life is short; surely we should be doing the work that needs doing, before the night comes when no man may work; and surely we render ourselves offensive if our work become nothing more than a feverish effort to evade that appointed night. Simpering, whining, weeping and cringing, I Don't Want To Die, I'll do anything, anything, if you'll just let me live forever, down on our knees, Buckled Up For Safety, Buckled Up, surely we do stink—to borrow a phrase—surely we stink, in the nostrils of God. And surely, too, the thing we fear will come upon us with a greater vengeance, just as it came upon us in 1939, just as it came upon the old empire in the fifth century, just as it comes upon little boys and girls who won't take their medicine, just as it always comes upon quislings and sycophants and special pleaders of every stripe, just as it has always come upon the cowards who die a thousand deaths.

Be clear about it, then: this is a wicked gospel, this new gospel of fear; nursed and perpetuated by the teased and perfumed mice in human form who have discovered that the prospect of sheer terror possesses a fatal attraction for the simple folk who watch their antics on a billion flickering screens: tune in tonight at seven and hear about the latest Warning Signals, lest ye die. Do you suffer from headaches? Are you a victim of Chronic Fatigue? Do you have any of these symptoms? Do you know where your children are? Don't talk to strangers! Have you been exposed to high levels of mercury? Carbon Monoxide? Child Abuse? The Trauma Of Bad Sex? Lead? Radiation? Poverty? Aren't you afraid of losing your traveler's checks in a foreign land? Do you think there will be a third world war in your lifetime? If you'll just tune in, booby—if you'll just read all about it, if you'll just get Frequent Check-Ups, if you'll just fork over enough cash, if you'll just *worry* enough—maybe It won't happen, maybe you won't die . . . tonight. And so fear replaces sex as the most reliable hook for snaring the largest numbers of slack-jawed vacant-eyed viewers and "readers" and bowed and bloodied suckers.

The nasty little message that is being hammered home, day by day and hour after hour, is that it is only the foolish who suffer and die. Those five million Russian youths who fell fighting the Kaiser in 1917—the German kids who bled on the other side of the fence—the saintly Tsar who went so meekly to his beastly death in Ekaterinburg—those Victorian gentlemen who died trying to raise Africa (and New Zealand and India and Arabia) from the swamp of barbarism—the European ladies who went so unprotestingly to the gas ovens—the Pathan tribesmen who are bleeding even now near the Khyber Pass—your grandfather who succumbed to cholera—your aunt who died in infancy—even that Nazarene who called himself the son of man—they were all just *dumb*, you see. They didn't Plan Ahead, they didn't Take Precautions. We, on the other hand—we smart little cookies, we who have learned to look after our own skins—we can go on forever. Oh, sure, there may come a time when we're not photographed as much as we used to be, a time when we begin to fade away, like . . . like Walter Cronkite; but we won't be *dead*, or anything like that. We'll just be Off Camera. Or maybe in syndication, if we play our cards right, and avoid Stress Situations.

The First Line of Defense

Very well, then, this religion of cowardice is evil stuff. Is there a defense against it—a prescription for common bravery? Yes; in fact there are two of them. The lesser—that is, the less reliable in times of darkness and danger—may be thought of as the Churchillian Assurance. This assurance is in essence nothing more than the natural self-confidence—call it valor, if you will—of the natural man (as opposed to the spiritual man, or the gentleman); and it was given most glorious expression by that best example of the natural man, Mr. Winston Churchill, in the wake of a street accident in the winter of 1931. The accident occurred in New York City, of course, and it was a nasty one: Mr. Churchill had been looking for Bernard Baruch's house, thought he spied it on the other side of the street, leapt out of his cab to make sure, and—ignoring the tendency of Americans to drive on the wrong side of the road—looked right when he should have looked left. The chubby warrior who had emerged unscathed from half a dozen Victorian wars was knocked to the ground by what is usually described as "a large vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed," with predictable consequences. Like everything that happened to Mr. Churchill, the adventure became an article for the *Daily Mail*:



> I certainly suffered every pang, mental and physical, that a street accident or, I suppose, a shell wound can produce. None is unendurable. There is neither the time nor the strength for self-pity. There is no room for remorse or fears. If at any moment in this long series of sensations a grey veil deepening into blackness had descended upon the sanctum I should have felt or feared nothing additional.
>
> Nature is merciful and does not try her children, man or beast, beyond their compass. It is only when the cruelty of man intervenes that hellish torments appear. For the rest—live dangerously; take things as they come; dread naught, all will be well.

Live dangerously. Take things as they come. Dread naught. All will be well. In some respects these are the very best words to live and die by. But then, many will say that it is one thing for a Winston with a Mission in life to believe that he will somehow be spared the worst pangs—as Churchill's aunt wrote to him after the accident, "Of course you have been spared to still do great things in the future"—and quite another thing for the missionless Dagwood in the suburbs of Detroit to keep a stiff upper lip in the face of all the whirling mechanical and emotional dervishes of modern life, lying in wait for him at every turn of the twentieth-century screw.

And indeed in one sense at least the objection would be well taken. We have called Winston Churchill "the natural man" but he was a Natural Man with a particularly high opinion of himself, and long before he had a "mission"—a mission beyond the promotion of Winston Churchill, that is—he regarded himself as the sort of fellow who would, someday, *have* such a mission. He, like most worldly souls, was therefore able to believe in the existence of a special providence that was keeping tabs on one ambitious lad, and sparing that lad for greater things. *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* was published just one year before the near-fatal accident on the

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streets of New York. This is interesting:

> I found that whatever I might think and argue, I did not hesitate to ask for special protection when about to come under the fire of the enemy: nor to feel sincerely grateful when I got home safe to tea. I even asked for lesser things than not to be killed too soon, and nearly always in those years, and indeed throughout my life, I got what I wanted. This practice seemed perfectly natural, and just as strong and real as the reasoning process which contradicted it so sharply.

The assistant professors will say that we've somehow lost track of the point here, in the smoke of the Battle of Omdurman and the Boer War; but we'll beg to differ, because this *is* the point, precisely the point: that it is the Churchillian sense of special protection—that constant awareness of some ever-vigilant providence—that finally frees a soul from fear; and that it is only the life that feels *itself* to be worth living—only the life of purpose, if you will—that is able to feel that hedge of protection. The final question, then, is obvious: How are we to give the suburban Dagwood the heart of the British lion? How are simple men and women of average means and limited influence to be convinced that Someone up there is watching? How is the grandchild of the freed serf to defend himself and his family against the oiled and painted politicians and "anchorpersons" and Consumer Advocates with their crazy-house statistics and their shrill warnings of impending doom and their high-pitched celebrations of mass hysteria? How is the unpretentious victim of the democratic tyranny to learn to accept death and pain and sorrow quietly again; how is he to overcome the infantile tendency to rebel against authority, to rage against the night, to kick against the pricks? How are we to get this damn country to *calm down* now that the sky is falling?

It is the feeling in these quarters that the ancient assurance of the natural hero—live dangerously, dread naught, all will be well—is not only demonstrably irrelevant to the enforced wimpery of modern urban life, but also ultimately second-rate. It is second-rate because there comes a time in the hero's life—in old age, or retirement, or after the last war is over—when he begins to suspect that the heroic mission is over, too; and then he begins to be afraid at last. He realizes that whatever has been watching over him in the heat of battle has no reason to be interested anymore. Now this particular spectator will hear no criticism of Mr. Churchill's heart from any man (though the erratic policies of a lifetime are fair game); but one glance at the badly written diaries of the P. M.'s bitter little physician, Charles Wilson (later Lord Moran), will show us what happened to the lion's confidence in old age:

> To do nothing, day after day, when he had done so much, is a searching test of character, and it found Winston's will undermined by age and infirmity. . . . If, in those sad years of mounting decrepitude, he seemed to be fearful of the future of mankind and grew to hate change and became intolerant of criticism; if he did not try to hide his distaste for what was left to him of life, I cannot forget the anguish of that time "when he was the chief mourner at his own protracted funeral." When at the end of November, in the year 1964, he came to the great age of ninety, the long chronicle of boredom and despair was hardly broken by the celebrations. . . . I think he was a lonely man, as I suppose he had been always.

Enough, we'll quote no more; suffice it to say that the reader who looks up the word "Churchill" in Lord Moran's index will find appended to it dozens of entries under such headings as "indecision," "fear of air travel," "procrastinator," "general apprehensiveness," "petulance," and the like; entries that could never have appeared in any biography of the younger hero. And so we see that the apprehension and final despair of the natural man who is not lucky enough to die with his boots on is the despair of the man who knows that there is no possible existence, for him, after death, or even after retirement. Indeed Mr. Churchill himself believed—and surely all of us, whatever our religion, or lack of it, must yield to him on the point—that Winston Churchill ceased to be when Winston Churchill's worldly activity ceased to be. "From the beginning of 1895 down to the present time of writing I have never had time to turn round," he chortled in 1930, ten years before the real fun started; "I could count almost on my fingers the days when I have had nothing to do. An endless moving picture in which one was an actor. On the whole Great Fun!" He—like all good-hearted natural men—was so much a part of, and a lover of, this world, that it strikes us as improbable that any great portion of him should be living on somewhere in some exalted state. He would be so . . . so *bored*. The hero is not soul, but flesh.

We are convinced then that the fortitude of the natural man must always fail, when the lights are low; it fails because the man himself sees that he has always created his own providence, and that he cannot put a name to that providence, or distinguish its purposes from his own; in sum, he does not know in whom, or what, he has trusted. His power has been the power not of comprehension, but of stoicism—of bravery in the face of *in*comprehension—and as such it is untrustworthy. His providence withdraws its protection from him as his mission is accomplished (or abandoned), and his battles won (or lost); and eventually—like Mr. Churchill—he becomes afraid to get in an airplane, afraid of inactivity and disease, sullen at the thought of extinction. The Natural Man—even when he's a Great Man—can never be anything more than that, and if and when the "Great Fun" stops being quite so much fun, he has nothing to show for it but a mess of pottage (and a grateful civilization). Therefore—while praising the right-minded hero and cheering his increasingly rare appearance among us—we may agree that his self-imposed bravery is no reliable or universal defense in an age of unprecedented terror.

Do you know how John Hooper died? It's not a pretty story, but one worth telling.

The Last Line of Defense

Is it safe to say that no one reads John Newton anymore? A coy remark, to be sure: they weren't even reading him a hundred years ago, if we may take the word of a reigning literary butterfly of that day, who noted with characteristic condescension that "Newton's prose works . . . simple in style, sincere, fervid, and soul-searching, were long popular, but are now little read." And yet there were happier times in the affairs of men, almost two hundred years ago, when John Newton was one of the best-known and best-loved authors in the English-speaking world. In those days there were half a dozen rival editions of his collected works, which sold in huge numbers around the world, from Caernarvon to Boston to Sydney; and he himself, growing old in London, refused awards and honorary degrees from as far away as Princeton, New Jersey ("Prince-town," he called it). "It was Newton's *goodness* rather than his greatness that rendered him so especially attractive," said the historian Josiah Bull; "Newton's character was beautiful in its entireness." "For myself," wrote the Scotsman Alexander Whyte, "I keep John Newton on my selectest shelf of spiritual books; by far the best kind of books in the whole world of books."

And who was John Newton? Well, he was a Londoner, born in 1725, the son of a prosperous and high-minded sea captain. He was also something of a hell-raiser, in his youth; and in the course of his hell-raising he was captured by a press gang and put into service aboard a British man-of-war. Several unsuccessful escape attempts and subsequent floggings convinced our hero that a major career move was in order; and by the time he was twenty-three he was one of the established stars of the African slave trade. Oh, there were setbacks—he spent two years as a slave himself, in the service of the African mistress of a rival entrepreneur—but in general Mr. Newton (now Captain Newton) was able and anxious to pursue, in the words of his nineteenth-century biographer, "a reckless, debauched, profane and infidel life."

The good times can't last forever, however, and—to make a long and exciting and occasionally sordid story short and sweet—Something Happened, as it so often does; and by the time he turned forty the king of the slave trade was ready to begin life anew as a sincerely Calvinistic curate in the established Church of England. And boy did he have a lot of explaining to do—volume after volume of it, for the next forty years. And when he wasn't writing books or preaching sermons he found time to compose some of the most popular and representative ecclesiastical music of the eighteenth century—including, incidentally, the timeless Protestant hymn, "Amazing Grace." In truth it must be said that John Newton became one of the most adorable and warm-hearted old gentlemen who ever graced the face of the earth; though he, of course, would have denied it.

What's all this to us? Why do we care? We care because John Newton was a very "ordinary" man who was not afraid of life, and because he spoke for other ordinary men—our predecessors on earth—who were not paralyzed by the thought of death. This fellow Newton was no theoretician, no special heroic case, no resident of the ivory tower or the marble hall; he spoke to and for the Dagwoods, not the Churchills, of his day. In the very typical words of a very typical assistant professor of our own sad day, Newton's works "were characterized by unction and intensity, but they have no literary value." Let us pray always to be spared anything of Literary Value, let us look always for unction and intensity: modern assistant professors speak only to other assistant professors, but real and honest souls—and John Newton was such—can speak more usefully to one another across all the aching centuries. This man Newton can show us how unexceptional men and women in all previous eras used to face life, and

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stare pain and death down; he can show us the courage we've lost, and he can tell us how to tap its source again.

It has to be said first—and indeed it would go without saying in any century but our own—that the courage we're after is, like every other virtue, the product of its opposition. In other words, as we say in the literary community, it don't come easy: "It is difficult to stem the torrent, or to avoid the infection of the world," conceded John Newton; even more difficult, he knew, "to live superior to the fear of man, as becomes us, if we know whose we are, and whom we serve. But though difficult, it is practicable and attainable, and actually attained by believers."

What was he getting at? Why, spiritual confidence, of course, as the indispensable cornerstone of physical and moral fortitude; the fellow was, after all, the Curate of Olney, Bucks. So bear with us for a moment while Mr. Newton gets religious, and says things that may not be said in polite company in 1986. Indeed it is precisely in the region of his moral certitude that we catch the unmistakable whiff of the past, and the apparent source of his daily strength:

> No opposition can prevail against us, if God be for us. It is impossible to deny, or even to doubt, this truth, upon the principles of reason: for who, or what, can injure those who are under the protection of Omnipotence? And yet it is not always easy to maintain the persuasion of it in the mind, and to abide in the exercise of faith, when, to an eye of sense, all things seem against us. . . . Job was a faithful and approved servant of God, yet for a season his trials were great, and his confidence was sometimes shaken. But he was supported and at length delivered.

In sum, said John Newton, "the most that opposers can do is to kill the body. If God permits his people to be thus treated, still they are not forsaken. Their death is precious in his sight. . . . Stephen, though apparently given up to the power of his adversaries, and cruelly stoned to death, was no less happy than those who die in composure upon their beds, with their friends around them. Nor was he less composed."

And so forth. What we see here is that the courage of our best ancestors was the courage of long-suffering, of submission rather than bravado or defiance: a courage born of faith, to be sure, but not the FeelGood faith of our contemporary televised evangelists, the easy faith that calls upon the Almighty Sugar Daddy to decorate his self-appointed children with health and wealth and wisdom and worldly happiness. Rather it was the other side of the coin: it was a faith in the value of tribulation itself, a faith in the propriety of the ultimate unseen outcome, a common understanding that, in the long run, suffering was a good thing for all concerned. Someone up there knew what he was doing, and all was for the best, even if you could rarely see it at the time. Reputable theology, in 1786.

But giddy stuff, in 1986. Somehow it all made sense, in the midst of plague and revolution and tyranny; somehow it no longer makes sense, in the wake of the Great War and the death camps. And yet, not such giddy stuff, if we recast the proposition; because now, as then, one of the great divisions in the world is the division between those who have learned the most elementary lesson of life—that all growth comes through affliction—and those who are mystified by the very idea of beneficent pain. Malcolm Muggeridge put the matter with characteristic lucidity, in a recent conversation with William Buckley, as follows:

> You know, as an old man, Bill, looking back on one's life, it's one of the things that strikes you most forcibly—that the only thing that's taught one anything is suffering; not success, not happiness, not anything like that. The only thing that really teaches one what life's about—the joy of understanding, the joy of coming in contact with what it really signifies—is suffering, is affliction.

Now, you either understand what Mr. Muggeridge is getting at, or you don't. And even if you do understand it—perhaps one should say *especially* if you do understand it—you're not very likely to embrace the cause of suffering in public. In the first place, you're a creature of the flesh like other men, and, though you know what's good for you, you'd rather not be hurt just the same, thanks very much; and in the second place, as Mr. Muggeridge notes, "there is an element you could almost call decency in us which says, Well, I haven't had to suffer that myself and therefore it ill behooves me to point to it as a blessing."

Some among us, however, have earned the right to put in a good word for misery in public. Muggeridge recommends the testimony of some of these remarkable individuals, to wit: "I think in our time it's been marvelously demonstrated by Solzhenitsyn and the other heroic people from the Soviet labor camps, all of whom say the same thing—the ones that have achieved spiritual perception through it—that there they learned this point, that it's through the affliction that you can see reality and that, therefore, as Solzhenitsyn himself says in his Gulag book, 'Thank you, prison camp, for bringing this illumination into my life which otherwise I would have lost.'"

There's an intersection of perception here, an alliance of the centuries: Mr. Solzhenitsyn, meet the late John Newton. Indeed let's balance those slices of Muggeridge with a final quotation from Mr. Newton, who sketched the crucial connection—the connection between the settled spirit and the stalwart life—in the closing passages of a letter he wrote to a good friend in the pivotal summer of 1776:

> It is not necessary for me to be rich, or what the world accounts wise; to be healthy, or admired by my fellow-worms; to pass through life in a state of prosperity and outward comfort;—these things may be, or they may be otherwise . . . but it is necessary for me to be humble and spiritual, to seek communion with God . . . and to yield submissively to his disposal, in whatever way, whether of service or suffering, he shall be pleased to call me to glorify him in the world. It is not necessary for me to live long, but highly expedient that whilst I do live I should live to him.

The final question, then, is obvious: How are we to give the suburban Dagwood the heart of the British lion?

"Worm-theology," they call it today, with the righteous sneer of the fat and happy Rugged Individual. And how they'd shrink from the implications of the sentence that concludes that long-ago letter, the endearing little prayer that wraps up the Newtonian case in forty words: "Let me have his presence and his Spirit, wisdom to know my calling, and opportunities and faithfulness to improve them; and as to the rest, Lord, help me to say, What thou wilt, when thou wilt, and how thou wilt."

And now we've done it. We've gone too far. Already in the distance we can hear the outraged chants of the assistant professors, as they scrabble frantically through the poli. sci. department's Rolodex, in search of the telephone number of the campus chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union: we've tricked them, we've savaged the Peace of Academia, we've sneaked some of that religious *muck* into the discussion in the most irresponsible and intolerant way, without fair warning, in violation of the most basic statutes of the contemporary American Inquisition, and we're going to pay for it. The high priests of the faculty lounge feel betrayed, ambushed, *violated*: some things just aren't done, if-you know what's good for you, and at the very top of the list of things that aren't permitted is any serious public reference to—to that, you know, to that . . . that archaic word with the three letters in it—in other than historical terms. Nothing can excuse our behavior.

Well, we admit it, and we're embarrassed, and we're very sorry. Still—speaking strictly in historical terms, mind you—the conclusion is unavoidable: in previous centuries, the protected life—no, the confident life, the *peaceful* life—was the directed life; and the directed life was the virtuous life—or, if you must (you zealot, you), the godly life. In examining the absence of courage in our own time, we find ourselves looking, as so often before, at that old standby of History 3101, The Loss of Faith.

So you'll find no remedies here. If remedy does exist, it's to be found in two hundred and fifty million little fragments, resting all too quietly in the cores of two hundred and fifty million little souls; and no doubt you know how and where to start looking for your own fragment, if you haven't found it already. For our part, we keep coming back to a line we saw somewhere, can't recall exactly where—on the side of a stalled bus, probably, or maybe scrawled across a questionable photograph in *People* magazine (scrawling is encouraged around here); anyway the thrust of the thing was that he who seeks to save his life shall lose it; and that he who loses his life shall save it. Weird stuff, hey? And there was a punch line, too—a question, really—that seemed to hint at the price the coward pays, every day of his anxious life: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" A ruder spectator might be tempted to address the same question to an obese and satiated nation, in love with its own false securities and stifling nightmares. But all these questions will be answered, and sooner than we think.

In the meantime, put out that cigar. Drop that glass. Throw out that venison. Pull down those blinds. Don't speak to strangers. Always suspect the presence of deadly germs or other contaminants. Memorize those warning symptoms. Look out for Number One. And please. Buckle Up. For Safety. Because We Care.

Everybody else is going to die, Dagwood.

But not you.

You're going to live forever.

And you deserve it, cupcake. □

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Liu Fong Da, with John Creger

EXECUTION DAY IN ZHENGZHOU

Lucky eyes under Deng Xiaoping.

Since Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping's relatively moderate policies of steady modernization, relaxed state control over production, and individual initiative have brought China to the point of entering into widespread exchanges, including trade, with the West. Enthusiastic about China's opening, Westerners often mistake the reports of increased economic freedom inside China for signs of incipient democracy.

But we Chinese know that there are many faces to what is happening in China under Deng Xiaoping. In the fall of 1983, as a teacher from a university in another part of China, I led a group of graduate students in fieldwork outside Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province, on the Yellow River plain in north central China. For almost three thousand years, from perhaps 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1200, the city was the center of China's cultural and political life. Today, under socialism, the area around Zhengzhou is mainly agricultural, producing much of the nation's wheat and some of its corn. One morning while on this field expedition, my students and I witnessed an event, carried out at Deng's order, which shows a face China rarely turns to the West.

The morning of September 23, 1983 was clear and warm in North China. It was what we call there a golden autumn. The sky was deep blue and the warm air hung with the sweet smell of cut wheat. Fields of the light brown wheat stubble stretched in from the countryside to the outskirts of Zhengzhou. My students and I had not gone to the field as usual that day, but had stayed in our dormitory on the city's main street to analyze soil samples for my students' thesis work. Around 10:30 one of the students came up to my room where we were working to ask permission to go to a parade which he had just heard was about to begin. Curious, I gave permission and we all went down to the street.

As visitors in Zhengzhou, we had heard nothing before about a parade. No announcements had been posted or printed in the newspapers. No official holiday had been declared. But I could see by the number of expectant people pouring onto the streets that for some time the peasants and workers, the cadres and students and small children of Zhengzhou had known: an execution day was coming.

Of course no one knew who or how many were to be killed, or for what crimes. Unless it is deemed politically necessary to publicize them, executions in China are kept secret and carried out under tight security. This time, though, the news must have come quietly down from the city's highest cadres and through Party branches to schools, factories, shops, and hospitals. So, I saw, the Party means to instruct the people with a show. It means to give them lucky eyes . . .

In a city of two million it seemed all work and school had come to a stop. I estimated later that close to half the city's population—almost a million people—must have left their jobs and classrooms. People crowded into every available place—along the sidewalks, on steps, jammed in doorways. Faces pressed at each small window of the five-story red and yellow brick buildings. Soldiers and policemen stood along the streets at intervals to keep the way clear.

A shout went up the four-lane main street: "It's coming!" At once everyone froze still and silent. People stood on tiptoe and small children sat on shoulders.

First it was the sound of motorcycle engines. Then fifteen or sixteen armed policemen on two- and three-wheelers came slowly into sight. The only sound above the low-throttled engines was the crackle of a police radio.

The main attraction followed immediately: Forty-five flatbed trucks, one after another, rolled by at no more than five m.p.h. Since the police department had very few of its own, the trucks had been borrowed from factories, all different makes and colors. At the front of each truck bed, just behind the cab, stood a condemned man bound with heavy rope. The rope ran in an "X" across his chest and around to his back, holding in place a tall narrow sign. On the top half of each sign was an accusation: "Thief," "Murderer," "Rapist." On the bottom half was the accused's name, marked through with a large red "X." The prisoners seemed to be wearing their own tattered clothes. Each was flanked by two policemen.

When we have seen something special, we Chinese say that our eyes have been lucky. The thought crossed my mind that the parade was moving so slowly to give the people lucky eyes. Parading criminals this way is a practice going back deep into Chinese feudalism. For two thousand years we have been conditioned to feel we are fortunate to see such things.

The forty-five carried themselves in various ways. Some were standing with heads down. Others carried their heads upright, defiantly. Others wept openly, seeming full of remorse at their crimes, or perhaps despairing of clearing their names. As the trucks rolled past, some of the condemned turned their heads from side to side, staring wide-eyed—as if the whole scene were unreal and they were already on the way to the West Heaven of the common people's traditions.

I thought of the many modern Chinese movies and novels that continually show scenes of Guomindang (Nationalist) and Japanese executions of Communists during the Party's thirty-year struggle for power, in which a hundred thousand Communists died. Before being executed, the heroes are asked if they have anything to say. Invariably they shout out, "Long live Chairman Mao!" or "Long live the Communist Party! Long live Marxism!" And just before dying they break into the Internationale.

But this day in Zhengzhou, if any of the forty-five had something to say to the people, no one heard it. Another,

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more slender rope was draped around each condemned man's neck. If he had begun to shout or struggle, we all knew one of the two policemen standing beside him would have pulled on the choking rope. If he continued, the other policeman had a small dagger. Driven in the back and left undisturbed, the dagger would let no blood escape. The two policemen could then hold the body up all the way through the parade and execution. For the performance must go on. The people must receive some education.

Behind the trucks came about twenty-five small black cars, carrying fifty or sixty party or police cadres. Very slowly the parade wound through the main streets of Zhengzhou, attracting followers at every turn. By the time it reached the outskirts of the city, perhaps a hundred thousand of the million onlookers in the city were actively following. The streets were strewn with trash, everyone was stumbling and streaming with sweat and out of breath, but still they followed the forty-five trucks. Some rode bicycles. Most, like me, alternately ran and walked. We knew the most dramatic act was coming.

Three miles outside the city a dry creekbed widens out in a cornfield. The widening is maybe two hundred by four hundred yards. Yellow banks from three- to six-feet high form a huge natural amphitheater. Corn the height of a man grows on the banks, up to their edges. And below, a fine green grass covers the creekbed. The horde following the parade swept onto the site, flattening the corn on the banks. I followed along in the crowds, wondering, Why are we trampling food to watch people killed?

The lower end of the widening is bounded by a highway, the same height as the banks. The parade vehicles sat in formation on the road, stopping all other traffic. A ramp, in the right corner, led from the road down to the creekbed. A loose ring of policemen in white jackets and blue pants stood around the edges of the creekbed to keep the people from spilling from the banks down into the grass.

Out in the center was a row of wooden stakes with circular signs numbered one to forty-five. About six feet in front of each stake a hole had been dug, roughly a foot in diameter and six-inches deep. The cadres got out of their cars, walked down the ramp, and stood in a group, looking over the preparations. The accused already had been brought down from the truckbeds and were being kept in waiting beside the trucks.

Across China that September and October there were many shows. This one in Zhengzhou ran twice again.

Three red flares suddenly shot high into the sky from the road somewhere behind the prisoners. Each escorted by two white- and blue-uniformed policemen, the accused were now marched rapidly down the ramp, the signs still tied behind them. Some had lost the use of their legs from fear. These the policemen dragged to their places.

The moment the forty-fifth reached his place, three green flares launched into the air. Before they fell out of sight, from seemingly nowhere a line of forty-five green-uniformed policemen carrying rifles filed quickly into the creekbed. They took positions behind each prisoner.

Several seconds after the last policeman reached his place, three yellow flares went up. The two escorting policemen in blue and white caught each man behind the knees, forcing him to a kneeling position, and then separated to each side. In unison, the green-uniformed policemen stepped forward and put rifle barrels within ten inches of the backs of the accused's heads.

The forty-five shots rang out in one voice.

Together, the bodies jerked forward and splayed out in different ways on the grass, bloody pieces landing to both sides of the holes, and some actually in the holes. The ring of policemen below the banks held the staring crowd back. A hundred and thirty-five policemen—two escorts and one executioner for each prisoner—made a single line, marched quickly back to the trucks, and were driven away. Their job was finished.

Down the ramp came fifteen or sixteen white-gloved policemen with clipboards and pistols. Stopping at every body they jotted quick notes on the clipboards. A few of the bodies, not having been hit squarely, still lay twitching or quivering. These were shot again.

The cadres stood briefly at the bottom of the ramp discussing something. Then they looked at their watches, walked up to their cars, and drove back to the city. The white-gloved policemen with the clipboards filed into two of the remaining trucks. I glanced at my watch. It was twelve noon.

The only officials remaining were the twenty or thirty policemen who now were ringing the bodies. Suddenly, as the cadres' cars went out of sight down the highway, the people surged down from the banks and closed in, shouting. The front rows broke through the police line to where the bodies lay, and stopped short in horror as they got near enough to make out details. But the pressure behind them was too great; many were pushed ahead and forced to trample the bodies. Some fell sprawling over them. One man beside me was pushed out of his shoes. Kids screamed at the sight of blood and pieces of skull. Some blood got on my shoes. To protect the bodies, a policeman pulled out one of the numbered stakes, scooped up some brains on the circular sign, and held the people at bay with it. They reared back ten or fifteen feet in a circle around him.

An hour or so later, along with most of the crowd, I left. But I heard that at midnight, under a bright moon, several thousand people remained staring at the bodies, and that through the night others continued coming.

Most of the executed's families did not come to claim the bodies, although they would have had to pay just the minimal "bullet fee" to take possession. It wasn't only that the bodies were badly mutilated. It was necessary to draw a clear line between an executed relative and oneself. Claiming the body would demonstrate that one still had some sympathy with a criminal. So the bodies remained displayed until the third day, when they were taken somewhere and disposed of.

The following day everywhere in the city the city court posted announcements, with pictures of the executed's mutilated upper bodies. They described the criminals, their backgrounds, and their various crimes. Nowhere was there any discussion of the justice of the sentences. No mitigating circumstances of any kind were mentioned. There had been no trials; no one really knew what kind of people had been killed.

But the people knew there were Party activists circulating among them dressed as peasants, listening for inappropriate opinions. So they gathered in front of the announcements and chattered about the misfortune of the executed's families. Many of them had had lucky eyes. But no questioning showed in their faces . . .

This one performance was finished. Across China that September and October there were many shows. This one in Zhengzhou ran twice again. And China has thirty provincial capitals. Shanghai sent a hundred and one purported criminals on to West Heaven; Wuhan, sixty-eight; Peking, maybe seventy-nine. Inside China many have guessed at the number killed during that golden autumn of 1983. Some put it at 80,000. Some at 150,000. But this is only guesswork.

The number almost certainly runs well into six figures. During those two months every provincial capital and county seat in China produced such shows. China has two thousand counties. If every county executed only five, the tally would come to 10,000. If ten, 20,000. And if the play was produced three times, how many?

I don't know.

One man, though, knows. He ordered all the fresh clipboard reports sent to his office. Like all Chinese, Deng Xiaoping is very proud of five thousand years of civilization. And government of, by, and for the people is no more a part of Deng's policies than it is part of China's historical legacy.

This too is a face of what is happening in China. □

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Micah Morrison

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST MESSIAH

Bloody and abandoned in Lebanon.

Lebanon has become for us a kind of empty parable about endless violence, a morality play with no moral, no message. It is a feudal land, an idea of a nation imposed upon reluctant lords and restless subjects. Ambitious men rise, fall, sons and brothers and newcomers take their place. Great concentration is needed to place in proper order the exact sequence of "important" assassinations and massacres and bombings; one often feels this is a deeply senseless exercise.

We have become more or less familiar with the current cast of characters strutting across the crowded Lebanese stage: the Christian president, Amin Gemayel; the Sunni Moslem prime minister, Rashid Karameh; the Druse leader, Walid Jumblatt; the Shia Moslem Nabih Berri; Arafat of the PLO; Assad of Syria. To each his fiefdom, to each his legacy of bloodshed. In American eyes, the symbol of mysterious Lebanon has come to be the Bekaa Valley, a zone of almost mythological sinisterness, with its hashish fields, its inexplicable terrorist gangs, its Western hostages. The Lebanese have learned to live with the madness. "You can't scare the Lebanese anymore," a former cabinet minister told the *New York Times*. "Whatever you do to them, they have been through it twice already. They aren't even afraid of the people they should be afraid of."

The Israelis have given up, gotten out. The Americans have given up, gotten out. The Syrians would like nothing more than to get out and retain control, but that is impossible, so they get in deeper and deeper. Arafat would like nothing more than to get back in, but the Syrians and the Shiites and the Christians want him to stay out, so the fighting in that particular little war continues to sputter around the Palestinian slums and refugee camps. And if the Syrians or the Palestinians get in too deep, too close to the border in the south, the Israelis will come back in. No system of logic, no amount of "game plans" can encompass the Lebanese situation. The Shiites want more power, and they deserve it—but at whose expense? Not at the expense of the Christians, who are losing ground fast. Not at the expense of their Sunni brothers. Certainly not at the expense of the tenacious Druse. Are the Syrians letting terrorists infiltrate toward Israel's "security zone" in southern Lebanon? Are the Shiites? What is the "meaning" of the Syrian connection to European-based terror attempts against Israeli targets? What is the "significance" of the creeping advance of Syrian military units in southern Lebanon? Is Damascus planning to draw Israel back into Lebanon and make a grab across the Golan Heights? If so, would Israeli retaliation be a repeat of June 1982, when Jerusalem's forces decimated Syria's Soviet-supplied weaponry? Would the Russians allow this to happen again? Would a massive Soviet resupply effort bring the Americans back into the picture? Is Arafat, at odds with Assad, trying to provoke Israel into attacking Damascus? What is the Syrian game? What is the Israeli game?

Dangerous ideas and untested forces threaten the entrenched powers. Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon thought they could remake Lebanon. They were wrong. Hafez Assad thinks he can channel Lebanese geo-strategic resources into the service of his own designs for the region. So far he has not succeeded. Yassir Arafat thought Lebanon could be both an "alternate homeland" for the Palestinians and a launching pad for his war against the Jewish state, but he was driven out by the Israelis and returned to be driven out again by his own people. In the Shia community, Lebanon's largest in number and weakest in political power, Nabih Berri's Amal movement competes with religious radicals who draw inspiration and material support from Khomeini's Iran. The idea of a radical Shiite republic in Lebanon makes just about everybody very, very nervous. For now, the Syrians are the less-than-omnipotent kingmakers in this chaotic country. But what happens if the Syrians buckle, if Christian power self-destructs—will the Shiites be the next kings of Lebanon?

In 1982, after months in Lebanon, the Israelis knew little about their Shia neighbors; knew little indeed, it seems in retrospect, about the murderous Lebanese thicket. Four months after the June invasion, the welcoming atmosphere was starting to fade but the Israelis were still seen as liberators, as the powerful nation that had come to expel their mutual enemy, the Palestinians, who in little more than a decade had turned their quiet backwater into a land of casual savagery. In the beginning the south Lebanese had thrown rice and rosewater; now the locals were starting to say that it was time for Israel to go. Israeli commanders in the region were complacent: "the situation" was well in hand. The season of the suicide car-bombers lay ahead in the unimagined future.

In the fall of 1982, about four months into the occupation, I happened to be in southern Lebanon on a day that afforded me a glimpse of the Lebanese, and particularly the Shia, strangeness; of a way of life much different from ours, sustained by different myths, cultures, traditions. My ignorance of what was happening is, in some senses, unimportant. What is important, it seems to me, is what the event can show us about the arrogance of power, even a power full of the best intentions, as Israel was toward the local residents who did not take up arms against it.

We—journalists, academicians, and visitors upon whom Jerusalem wished to impress the notion of a "benign occupation"—were traveling in a small convoy of jeeps and buses from Beaufort Castle, an old Crusader fort that the PLO had used to direct fire into Israel, toward the town of Nabiteyeh. Mostly Shiite, a center of commerce before the PLO began to terrorize the

Micah Morrison, former Israel correspondent of The American Spectator, *is deputy director of the Committee for the Free World and editor of its monthly publication,* Contentions. *His article, "Christmas in Bethlehem," appeared in last December's* TAS.

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region in the 1970s, Nabiteyeh's population had shrunk from around 30,000 to about 8,000 in the years of Palestinian dominance. Now, we heard, the old residents had begun to return. In Beirut in the last few weeks, the PLO had finally boarded the boats for Tunisia, president-elect Bashir Gemayel and many of his top aides had been killed by a bomb planted by a Syrian agent, and Christian forces had passed through Israeli lines and entered the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatilla to avenge the death of Bashir by murdering an unknown number—scores certainly, hundreds probably—of people, including women and children.

The latest killings, and the possible ramifications they would have on "the situation," were the main topics of conversation on the bus. Looking out the window, I saw across a dusty field on the outskirts of Nabiteyeh what appeared to be a large group of bare-chested joggers running in loose formation along a parallel road and rhythmically thrusting their arms skyward. As the narrow highway curved closer to the parallel road, it became apparent that the men were singing and striking themselves in the back with small whips and sticks as they ran. Our "guide," a young officer with an uncertain grasp of English, was completely bewildered but said with authority that they were probably taking part in some sort of "local holiday."

Black flags hung from many of the houses. On the bullet-pocked walls were slogans in Arabic, posters of the grimacing Ayatollah Khomeini, and many more posters—some fading, some fresh—of another cleric, a man with a much gentler, almost forlorn expression. Emphatic Arabic writing surrounded the posters of this man, which appeared in Shia strongholds throughout Lebanon. The street began to fill with people and cars. Our lead jeep stopped for a consultation with the bus drivers: it was decided that we would go around Nabiteyeh. A man with a blood-spattered sheet wrapped around his chest staggered by, smiling. A weird chanting cut through the day, and up ahead we could hear the sounds of a great crowd. It was too late to turn back. The convoy slowly moved up a side road that turned into an alley, wound up a hill, curved past white-walled houses thick with grape arbors, and dropped us right into the center of the city.

Here were more young men wrapped in bloody sheets and turbans, their eyes glazed, smiles fixed on their faces. Our convoy pushed slowly through the crowd. In front of one of the posters of the quizzical-looking cleric, a teenager called out to us. As I looked down at him from the bus window, he raised a knife to his forehead and with a quick twist of his wrist proudly and unflinchingly cut away a tiny piece of his flesh. Blood welled up and ran down his face. His friends wrapped a cloth around his forehead and patted him on the shoulder. Throughout the milling, happy throng, men were shouting and striking themselves on the back with bladelike sticks and whips. A blind albino sat on the hood of a car, surrounded by children: people came over to touch him, perhaps for luck. Although there was no sense of immediate danger, the festive air carried something slightly crazed in it, as if at any moment the celebration could take a decidedly bad turn. Yet there was little of that silent hostility Westerners might encounter in, for instance, some of the radical cities of the West Bank. These people were interested in enjoying themselves and getting their pictures taken. We obliged, although the atmosphere in the bus was far from relaxed. Ahead, one of the soldiers in the jeep was nervously tapping his mounted machine gun and smiling tightly at the crowd.

"The PLO is gone," our guide said. "For the first time in many years people here can celebrate their Ashura. It is a holiday of their martyr. A holiday of the Shia."

"The PLO is gone," our guide said, after descending to the street and obtaining some information. "For the first time in many years people here can celebrate their Ashura. It is a holiday of their martyr. A holiday of the Shia." A boy, perhaps nine years old, raised a knife to his forehead. The wailing crested. Nabiteyeh fell away behind us. After the singing and the beating and the bleeding, the eyes of the flagellants shone with a placid madness. The only comparable gaze I have ever seen is the pre-dawn look in a person's eyes after a long night in the grip of a powerful hallucinogenic drug.

Ashura, I later learned, is the sole property of the Shiites. It marks the death in battle of a direct descendant of the Prophet, the Imam Hussein, on the plains of Kerbala, in southern Iraq; the violent display of self-flagellation we had stumbled across in Nabiteyeh was a public display of grief, part of the passion play that annually revives the tribulations of the Imam. (To the Sunni, the term imam means prayer leader; to the Shiite, the imamate is the repository of Divine Truth, and the term can be bestowed on a religious or political leader of great influence, such as the Imam Khomeini.) A power struggle ripped apart the young Islamic faith soon after the death of the Prophet, and the events at Kerbala in A.D. 671 sealed the Shia sense of separateness; the cries of passion surrounding Kerbala can still be heard echoing in Islam today.

As Johns Hopkins University scholar Fouad Ajami notes in his excellent new book, *The Vanished Imam*,[1] the early division in Islam was "a struggle between two ideas of succession: a religious one, claiming rule through descent from the Prophet, and a worldly one resting on the wealth and power of the expanding Moslem state and its formidable troops in the province of Syria." From Damascus came an order to the Imam Hussein: pledge allegiance to our rule; from Iraq came the call of the faithful: travel here and be our guide and teacher. Hussein left the Hijaz birthplace of Islam, in western Saudi Arabia, and with a small band of followers he started for Iraq. This was an affront Damascus could not tolerate. Outside of Kerbala 5,000 troops surrounded Hussein's camp and, on the tenth day of the Moslem month of Muharram, the day of Ashura, the Imam was killed by repeated blows of lance and sword, his body was trampled beneath the hooves of many horses, and his head was carried to Damascus.

Ajami writes: "The late seventh-century event marked with its themes of righteous defeat an entire branch of Islam. Kerbala, as it were, insisted on permanent relevance. 'Every day is Ashura, and every place is Kerbala,' Shia history taught." In this the Shiites were not unlike the Jews. Tragedy and disaster followed them for centuries. The Imams, from the first to the twelfth, came to tragic ends at the hands of the enemies of Shia Islam. With the disappearance of the twelfth Imam, a child who vanished from an Iraqi mosque and was probably murdered by agents of the ruling dynasty, Shiism entered a long period of darkness and messianic yearning. A final tenet was welded to the faith: the twelfth Imam was believed to be hidden in a state of occultation, or non-corporeal existence. "History became usurpation," Ajami writes. "The deeds of men faltered, men awaited the return of the Hidden Imam. In this messianic view, which shares its essential salvationism with Jewish and Christian eschatology, the Hidden Imam returns as a great avenger, a *mahdi*, a savior."

It is not difficult to see why many Shiites today think of themselves as living in a messianic era. In Iran, Khomeini rose and destroyed the Pahlavi dynasty. And in Lebanon too (and this is really the subject of Fouad Ajami's fascinating book) a would-be messiah came from Iran in 1959 and brought the Lebanese Shiites up from their submissive sleep. His name was Musa al Sadr and his fate was at once peculiarly Shiite and absolutely Lebanese. It was his picture that was plastered all over Nabiteyeh, all over Shia Lebanon. It was there because Musa al Sadr had fulfilled his Shia fate by showing his people the way to power, by being betrayed by obscure and evil forces, and vanishing.

Coming from a prestigious Iranian clerical family with roots in Lebanon, Sadr was a tireless organizer and speaker. For years he traveled the country—and often beyond Lebanon's borders—binding together the disparate Shia community. Religion and politics were one for him. He was the guiding force behind the creation of the Higher Shia Council, which put forward the long-ignored Shia claims for roads, schools, medical clinics, for more power and political patronage. After only a decade in the country, the title Imam came to him. Later, when all Lebanon was sliding into civil war, he founded Amal as a defense militia; as Lebanon disintegrated, the charismatic cleric grew increasingly powerful: his followers multiplied, and so did his enemies. He tried to balance all sides in disputes—Sadr was a talented diplomat, not a fanatic—but frequently he found himself at odds with the Palestinians and the Christians. Establishment Moslems were also unhappy with this "foreigner" who stirred up the poor. The left despised him. He was an enigmatic figure and rumors swirled around him. Who did he really work for? The Shah? The Americans? What was the meaning of his alliance with Assad of Syria? "Among the Palestinians and the parties of Sunni West Beirut," Ajami comments, "Musa al Sadr was seen as the enemy of everything 'progressive.' He had not shared in the exuberance of the left; he could no longer tolerate Palestinian control in southern Lebanon or pass over it in silence."

[1]Cornell University Press, $17.95. The reader looking for insight into the confusing Lebanese scene would do well to consult Ajami's book. The revised edition of Itamar Rabinovich's *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Cornell, $9.95 paper) complements the Ajami book by examining all the factions in Lebanon's struggle.

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Violent death became the Lebanese way of life. The PLO buildup in the south continued. Rival forces fell to feuding. The Syrians invaded in the summer of 1976, ostensibly to put an end to the fighting. Things began to slip away from Musa al Sadr's control. In March 1977, the powerful Druse chief Kamal Jumblatt was assassinated. His playboy son, Walid, would soon replace him. The civil war had been in full swing for nearly two years. In March 1978 the Israelis swept into—and then out of—southern Lebanon in the anti-PLO Operation Litani. But the PLO simply retreated with the civilian population and returned when Israel departed. The Shiites had taken the brunt of the Israeli strike, and now the PLO was back to continue tormenting them while building their "mini-state" in the south. Seeking funds and political support, Sadr embarked on a tour of Arab capitals. In Algeria, it was suggested to Sadr that he go see Libya's Muammar Qaddafi. A few days later Musa al Sadr was in Libya. No one has seen him since.

Reading Ajami's book, one has the sense of a man suddenly dwarfed by events, of a confident man controlling his destiny until one unnoticed day his country's destiny was controlling him. That, of course, is the Lebanese story. It is the story of Kamal Jumblatt and Bashir Gemayel and Yassir Arafat. In an only slightly different way it is the story of Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, and possibly of Hafez Assad. The story of Musa al Sadr differs only in its Shia aura, its messianic patina. Soon after Musa al Sadr disappears—it is all but certain that Qaddafi killed Sadr as a favor to his good friend Arafat—the Shah is toppled. Soon after that, the Imam Khomeini begins a holy war against Iraq—there are Shiites there too, after all, and Shia holy places, such as Kerbala. When Israel finally moves in 1982 to end the PLO's terrorizing of its border region, a rumor flys through the Shia slums of Beirut: Musa al Sadr has been found! He was held captive in the south all the time. The rumor, like all the previous rumors, was not true. But the rumors and the stories will continue, because the truth of Musa al Sadr's life has merged into the legend of the Hidden Imam and the longing of the Shiites for power and vindication.

A year after I was in Nabiteyeh, another Israeli convoy tried to pass through the streets on Ashura. This time events took a more tragic turn. It was 1983 and the occupation had gone far too long. It was the worst possible day for a show of arms—and that is what I meant about the arrogance of power, about learning nothing of the customs and complexities of a place and a people. The crowd turned ugly at the sight of their oppressors—on this day of all days the memories of the persecutions of the Imam Hussein gave extra passion to their lives—the soldiers had to shoot their way out of the enraged town. Two citizens died. It was a bad sign, and Israel would have to live through almost two more years of bad times, including the nightmare of Shia fanaticism and the suicide car-bombers, until it could finally extricate itself from the cursed country.

Now it appears that Lebanon is turning on itself again. The Western targets are mostly gone. The killings have been "localized." The security zone concept is working for Israel in the south and will probably remain there for a long time. Although Damascus is creeping its artillery and support lines down toward Israel, the Syrians appear to have their hands full with their own Lebanese problems, the failing Syrian economy, and the uncertain health of Hafez Assad.

It's possible that Lebanon may simply exhaust itself, that there is some finite point the carnage cannot continue past. Or perhaps a new power-sharing arrangement will be negotiated and will hold. But don't bet on it. Too many groups smell victory in the air. And the hardest, most uncompromising force in hard, uncompromising Lebanon (so different from the Lebanon of old!) appears to be the force of radical Shia Islam. Will the radicals triumph over Berri's Amal? They have won some significant battles, and they have the backing of Khomeini's Iran; they have the old legends of martyrdom and oppression, and they have yesterday's news of victory—both can be used to stir their followers; and they believe God is on their side and a Messiah is waiting in the wings. It happened in Iran and it almost happened in Lebanon with Musa al Sadr. It could happen again. □

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Holiday gift suggestions from some of our favorite readers and writers.

MORTIMER J. ADLER

I have two sets of recommendations of books for people to use and read.

The first set consists of guidebooks to reading itself. Here there are three items: (1) *The Harvard Guide to Influential Books*, just published by Harper & Row; (2) Charles Van Doren's *The Joy of Reading*, published last year by Crown Publishers; and (3) my own book, *A Guidebook to Learning*, published last year by Macmillan.

The second set consists of books that everyone should read during the bicentennial year of 1987. Here again are three books: (1) Carl Van Doren's *The Great Rehearsal*, which is coming back into print; (2) Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia*, also being brought back into print; and (3) my book about the Constitution, under the title *We Hold These Truths*, to be published by Macmillan in the early spring of 1987.

Mortimer J. Adler is chairman of the board of editors of the Encyclopaedia Brittanica.

JACQUES BARZUN

For a steady view of the contemporary scene there is nothing like reading history, not because history repeats but because it *degeneralizes*. The "wonderful Renaissance," the "liberating Reformation." Read about them in Hugh Trevor-Roper's *Renaissance Essays* (Chicago, 1985), and you see how many more disparate adjectives and ideas you have to use. The saintly Thomas More, the villainous Paracelsus, and others become different people—not just complex, but intelligible, and none of them perversely wrong. As for Trevor-Roper, he writes like an angel and judges like a Solomon, even though he did err at first about Hitler's diaries.

Dr. Paul Dudley White, the cardiologist, became a national figure when he was called in to treat President Eisenhower, after some bumbling efforts by the White House Physician General Snyder. But Dr. White deserves his fame for a greater reason—his revision of accepted rules about the heart patient's proper way of life, now common knowledge. And he did many other things, including research on whales (Moby Dick's heartbeat), to earn him an international reputation. His life (*Take Heart*, by Paul Oglesby, M.D., Harvard Press, 1986), ably written by a student and colleague of his, takes one to far places in the company of a picturesque character.

The Strange Case of Edmund Gurney by Trevor H. Hall (Duckworth, 1980) is a superb piece of retrospective detection about the death of a most attractive late Victorian: Gurney was a man of letters, philosopher, musicologist, and co-founder of the English Society for Psychical Research. He died solitary and under a false name in a Brighton hotel room in 1888. Mr. Hall has used uncontested evidence to show how and why, and as he proceeds he gives splendid portraits of a notable group of thinkers. (Incidentally, Gurney's *Power of Sound* should be known and read by all music critics.)

Though Rayner Heppenstall gave the British public some of its best highbrow entertainment through the BBC, where he wrote and produced for over

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twenty years, in this country he is known only to amateurs of true crime, about which he was expert. But he was also an avant-garde novelist and a prophetic critic of the welfare state. His journals, deftly edited under the title *The Master Eccentric* by his friend Jonathan Goodman (Allison and Busby, 1986), richly satisfy the literary, social, and criminal interest, as well as portray a commanding character who may well appear less and less eccentric as time goes on.

After *Tolstoy's Letters* in two volumes, his *Diaries* in two more, all translated by R. F. Christian (Scribner, 1983, 1986): the two sets of books provide much material for literary and cultural criticism, and also display without need of commentary the Jekyll and Hyde personality—literary genius and unabashed monster. Though Tolstoy never stopped looking into his soul, he knew very little about himself and not much more about those around him—an ideal stance for making their life and his own an absolute hell. One ends the reading as full of pity as of fury.

Jacques Barzun is a historian and critic. His latest book, A Word or Two Before You Go . . . , *has just been published by Wesleyan University Press.*

IRA BERKOW

Following are some books that, had I been given them for Christmas—or any other time—I would have been deeply grateful to the donor:

1. *Quite Early One Morning*, by Dylan Thomas. One of the most beautiful, whimsical, delightful reminiscences I've ever read. A favorite line is dealing with a scene at a beach on a holiday, in which there was "a silent hullabaloo of balloons."

2. *The Lover*, by Marguerite Duras. A new book and a reminiscence of youth wholly different from Thomas's. This is a moody, sensual account of young womanhood.

3. *The Law as Literature*, edited by Ephraim London. Found this in a used-book store (copyright 1960). A wonderful collection of pieces from Socrates' *Apologia* to Darrow's defense of blacks in the Sweet case to Justice Jackson as chief prosecutor for the United States at the Nuremberg Trials.

4. *The Glory of Their Times*, new and enlarged edition, 1984, by Lawrence Ritter. "The Story of the Early Days of Baseball by the Men Who Played it." The old players, such as Rube Marquard, Bill Wambsganss, and Goose Goslin, speak with an earthy poetry.

5. *The Sweet Science*, by A. J. Liebling. The classic boxing book by the inimitable Liebling. I loved the moment when the managers for a lackluster challenger expressed great hope of their young man's chances against the undefeated Rocky Marciano. "Now," wrote Liebling, "I know why a lot of the books that get published do. Optimism is the besetting disease of all lovers of the arts."

Ira Berkow is a sports columnist for the New York Times *and author of the recently published* Red: A Biography of Red Smith.

TINA BROWN

1. *The Good Apprentice*, by Iris Murdoch. Her brainy dialogue and batty characters wormed their way into my subconscious until I was hooked.

2. *Perfume*, by Patrick Suskind. The literary *Blue Velvet.*

3. *The Spoils of Poynton*, by Henry James. In the age of acquisitiveness this slim volume seemed deliciously relevant.

Tina Brown is editor in chief of Vanity Fair.

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Modern Times, by Paul Johnson. I have now bought three copies of this magisterial tome, and two years later I am up to page 100. This reflects more on my attention span than on Johnson's awesome ability to blend history with narrative. By next Christmas I plan to be up to page 200.

Cutting Edges, by Charles Krauthammer. Reading Krauthammer's political essays is like reading Vidal, but in this case it's not a guilty pleasure.

Alabama Showdown, by Geoffrey Norman. It would take wild horses to drag me to a football game, but this book, about the intense rivalry between Alabama U. and Auburn, goes down like a twelve-year-old single malt. It's about football the same way *Hamlet* is about Danish foreign policy.

The Sun Never Sets, by Simon Winchester. Simply speaking, one of the finest travel books ever written. On a rank with Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana.* Winchester set out to visit each of the sixteen remaining British colonies, with result hilarious and poignant.

The Landing, by Haynes Johnson and Howard Simons. A ripping good yarn about two Nazis landed by submarine who come pretty close to assassinating FDR. Unfortunately, it has a happy ending.

Christopher Buckley is author of The White House Mess.

WILLIAM J. CASEY

Street of Joy, by Dominique LaPierre—an inspiring tale of how folks in the depths of Calcutta sustain each other with love and hope.

Yankees at the Court: The First Americans in Paris, by Susan Mary Alsop—how covert assistance from France enabled George Washington with a few thousand contras to defeat the strongest army in the world.

The Money Rustlers: Self-Made Millionaires of the New West, by Peter C. Newman—tells an exciting story about the innovative men and bold spirit that won the continent.

Red Storm Rising, by Tom Clancy—throws back the Soviet army, navy, and air force, just barely, in 650 pages.

The Liberal Crack-Up, by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.—analyzes one of the most important political occurrences of our time with wit and deadly serious insight.

William J. Casey is director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

LYNNE CHENEY

My all-occasion gift book (weddings, birthdays, Christmas, Chanukah) is the Library of America's *Thomas Jefferson.* Skillfully selected by the University of Virginia Scholar Merrill Peterson, the Jefferson papers contained in this book cover such a range that no one except a specialist will ever need another volume of our third President's writings—and what writings they are: the Declaration of Independence; Notes on the State of Virginia; hundreds of letters discussing everything from gardening to classical languages to hopes for the nation—all in Jefferson's lucid and elegant prose.

Friends to whom I've already given *Thomas Jefferson* can expect to receive Henry Adams's *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, also published by the Library of America. Adams gives us marvelous portraits of Jefferson, Madison, Napoleon, Talleyrand, and fits them into a narrative all the more compelling for the narrator's unmistakable presence.

For the sake of truth-in-packaging, I should acknowledge that the Library of America's publications of American classics are supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. So that my motives don't appear too impure, I will also point out that last Christmas, while I was still a senior editor at the *Washingtonian* magazine, I was recommending Frances Parkman's *France and England in North America*, another fine Library of America production.

Lynne Cheney is chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

CHUCK COLSON

Augustine's Confessions. This book remains the most magnificent autobiography ever.

Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis. Lewis's compelling logic transformed my life, as I understood for the first time who Jesus Christ is.

Against All Hope, Armando Valladares. A great tribute to the triumph of the human spirit. Christ met Caesar in the Cuban prison—and Christ won.

The Gulag Archipelago, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Classic literature with brilliant political, historical, and spiritual insights.

The Naked Public Square, Richard John Neuhaus. A magnificent exposition on the need for religious influence in public life.

Crumbling Foundations, Donald Bloesch. Prophetic warning against mixing ideology with the unadulterated truth of God's revelation.

The Christian Mind, Harry Blamires.

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A powerful apologetic for Christians to think, and thus act, Christianly.

Chuck Colson is chairman of the Prison Fellowship Ministries.

EVAN S. CONNELL

Janet Lewis wrote three novels based on famous cases of circumstantial evidence: *The Wife of Martin Guerre*, *The Trial of Soren Qvist*, *The Ghost of Monsieur Scarron*. All three belong in the library of a discriminating reader. Lewis tells these shocking stories with dignity, grace, and very deep understanding.

Beryl Markham's *West with the Night*, published in 1942, was forgotten until reissued by North Point Press in 1983. It will not likely be forgotten again. Her childhood in Africa and her solo flight across the Atlantic are truly astonishing.

For those who need to escape the quotidian horrors of twentieth-century America, or twentieth-century anywhere, there is comfort in the old Southwest: *Coronado* by historian H. E. Bolton, *The Land of Little Rain* by Mary Austin, *Sky Determines* by Ross Calvin, *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* by J. Frank Dobie, and Walter Van Tilburg Clark's collection, *The Watchful Gods*, which includes "The Wind and Snow of Winter"—the most resonant story I have ever read about our lost frontier.

Evan S. Connell is the author of Son of the Morning Star. *His novel* The Connoisseur *will be reissued by North Point Press next spring.*

ALISTAIR COOKE

Required Writing, by Philip Larkin. Since Larkin's death last year, this final work—of penetrating and immensely sensible criticism—is all the more to be cherished.

Flaubert's Parrot, by Julian Barnes. A very funny and unique experiment in biography.

A Cast of Killers, by Sidney D. Kirkpatrick. Riveting stuff, since it solves without doubt a sixty-year-old Los Angeles murder mystery.

Dentistry: An Illustrated History, by Malvin E. Ring. Aristotle said a crocodile is a fearsome thing, but a beautiful drawing of one is a source of pleasure. This definitive history of a painful subject, superbly illustrated from pre-Colombian America to the 1970s, is a joy to the reader (with no dental problems).

Alistair Cooke is a journalist and broadcaster.

JOHN CORRY

There is no question about what books to give for Christmas; the list is indisputable. First, you give the four-volume, paperback edition of *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, which Harcourt Brace Jovanovich has packaged in a nice yellow box. Forget, meanwhile, the argument about whether Orwell was a man of the left or the right. Orwell is important not because he tells us what to think (anyone can do that) but because he tells us how to think. That's why you give him for Christmas.

You may also give, to bright college students and up, *Modern Times* by Paul Johnson and *Political Pilgrims* by Paul Hollander. Both are in paperback, and together they tell you most of the important things you need to know about our century. Johnson says, and proves, that political movements are the curse of our times; Hollander writes about the Western intellectuals who fell in love with the movements. Neither author is stuffy.

Finally, you give to children and imaginative parents the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis and *Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. Lewis may have been muddled about some things, but the *Narnia* series—in a boxed paperback collection—is a charmer. *Wind in the Willows* is a classic, of course, but try the 1980 Holt Rinehart and Winston hardcover, illustrated by Michael Hague. The drawings are wonderful.

John Corry is the nonfiction television critic of the New York Times.

RICHARD G. DARMAN

I am obliged first to recommend the works of Plato, Shakespeare, and the Federalists, along with the Bible—enough, I suppose, to live and govern by.

That done, I can more freely confess: I read nonfiction bestsellers. This, of course, should be a source of embarrassment. So, like the people who say they read *Playboy* "for the fiction," I tell myself that I read bestsellers as an education in American cultural sociology.

With the likes of *Snake, I, Tina, His Way,* and *Iacocca* near the top of the bestseller list, the lessons would seem to be at least as discouraging as they are entertaining. But fortunately there are occasional surprises: Among 1986 autobiographical entries, for example, I would recommend John Colville's *The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. This is an insider's daily account of life and decision-making in and around 10 Downing Street during the war. It captures, at once, the characteristics of British leadership that both won the War and lost the Empire.

Stretching a bit, one might think of David Stockman's *The Triumph of Politics* as a related work—focusing on strengths and weaknesses of American leadership in and around 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Stockman's book is not as good as his next draft would have been. But it is still a great deal more informative than most books about American public policy-making, and a great deal better than the *Enquirer*-like material that was initially highlighted.

Stockman's one-time mentor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, put out a book this year that didn't quite make the bestseller list, but which I recommend here nonetheless: *Family and Nation*. A rarity among American politicians, the Senator has a demonstrated capacity to distinguish large ideas from small—and to do so well ahead of the crowd. In this book he is playing catch-up with himself, but is still ahead of most.

Having opened with a righteous reference to the Bible and the Federalists, I might even confess that sometimes I read bestselling fiction—like *Regrets Only*, itself a remarkable confession of cultural vacuity. Occasionally one finds a fiction bestseller that suggests there's a somewhat more complex reality and a more interesting reading public than the one that's represented by the works of Quinn, Krantz, Steel, et al. Often, it's the John Updike entry that performs this role—as it is again this year with *Roger's Version*. It has made the bestseller list in spite of its alleged weakness of plot and its redeeming social value: a seriousness about ideas. (I wonder: If there are enough Updike readers to make him a bestseller, where do they all turn between his books?)

Finally I take the liberty of mentioning *The Morning After: American Successes and Excesses 1981-1986* by George Will and *Was Einstein Right? Putting General Relativity to the Test* by Clifford Will. These aren't bestsellers. But I cannot resist recommending them in a class by themselves, "acts of Will." Maybe that's where Updike readers should turn.

Richard G. Darman is the deputy secretary of the Treasury.

TERRY EASTLAND

I'm inclined to read and recommend books on ethics and religion anyway, but working in the world's largest law office inclines me even more so, those subjects being ultimately more interesting. Here, then, are five for the season:

The Abolition of Man, by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, 1947, available almost anywhere in both paper and hardback). An elementary school text that taught subjectivism about morality provoked one of the most readable writers of our century to compose this classic articulation of the idea of objective value. Standing in the great tradition that dates back to Aristotle (and indeed before him), Lewis shows that "a dogmatic belief in objective moral value" is necessary not only to the proper moral education of the young but also to "a rule which is not tyranny or an

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236 pages $28.00

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obedience which is not slavery."

Modern Times, by Paul Johnson (Harper & Row, 1983, available in both paper and hardback). Lewis wrote *The Abolition of Man* in the mid-forties, which marks almost the midpoint of the history of the world (1917 to 1982) that Johnson chronicles in this huge and hugely ambitious book, which is a delight to read and reread. The ideology Lewis sought to counter was current at the start of this sixty-year period, for in the 1920s, Johnson observes, "the belief began to circulate, for the first time at a popular level, that there were no longer any absolutes: of time and space, of good and evil, of knowledge, above all of value." *Modern Times* is history with a moral message: "the abolition of man." The book forces meditation on the necessity of a moral foundation to political life, and ultimately of a religious foundation. Johnson shows that the abandonment of religious belief particularly by intellectuals created a vacuum in the twentieth century. "The history of modern times," he writes, "is in great part the history of how that vacuum has been filled."

Religion in American Public Life, by A. James Reichley (Brookings, 1985, paper). In his book Johnson points out that "the outstanding non-event of modern times was the failure of religious belief to disappear." Jim Reichley's fine book demonstrates the presence and persistence of religious belief throughout our history as a nation. An excellent handbook on legal developments regarding church and state, *Religion in American Public Life* argues persuasively that our free society depends ultimately on religious values for both stability and protection of individual rights.

The Search for Christian America, by Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden (Crossway Books, 1983, paper). Some would argue, and indeed some may argue in a certain upcoming political campaign, that we must have not simply a religious America but a Christian America, and that the American past offers solid precedent for such a nation. Hatch, Noll, and Marsden are evangelical Christians who are also American historians. As Christians, they reject the idea of a Christian nation and thus a Christian America (they argue that, post-Israel, there can be no "special" nation selected by God for achieving His divine purposes and that God instead works through the church). As historians, the three dispute the notion that in our past we can find an unambiguously Christian America. Their views deserve attention from those interested in the enduring tension between the City of Man and the City of God.

Surprised by Joy, by C. S. Lewis (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955, paper and hardcover). Writing about religion has its place, but writing inspired by true faith ought to have a superior place, particularly at Christmas. *Surprised by Joy* is Lewis's own spiritual autobiography, an account of his journey to faith, from childhood into his early thirties. His story reflects the dominant aspect of his personality—his intellect—but the reader can see that his emotional faculty was also touched as he moved—or, more accurately, was moved—to faith. Lewis was a man surprised by joy, a nice surprise if ever there was one.

Terry Eastland, director of public affairs for the Justice Department, has written for The American Spectator *since June 1975, when he contributed "The Amazing Grace of C. S. Lewis."*

FRANK J. FAHRENKOPF, JR.

I perused my home library to pluck the following titles from my recent wanderings in the vineyards of scholarship:

Robert A. Caro: *The Path to Power: The Early Years of Lyndon Johnson* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). Caro's masterful biography does more than show how an obsessive power-seeker employed ruthless, hardball politics in his career; it also revealed the dark side of the New Deal for the first time in American historiography.

Edmund Morris: *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (Coward McCann & Geoghegan, 1979). This Pulitzer Prize-winning biography traces the development of a unique, original American, who matured into the model of a manly statesman at the same time the United States matured into a world power.

William Manchester: *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, Visions of Glory, 1874-1932* (Little, Brown, 1983). The incredible story of a man who consistently refused to accept defeat, turning humiliation into victory. This biography should inspire every disgruntled Democrat thinking of changing parties instead of principles.

These three didactic biographies share a refreshing, almost novelistic prose style, while remaining true to the facts. More important, the contrasts of these life histories present a moral for today's leaders—those who seek power for the sake of principle often, ironically, fare better than those who seek power for power's sake.

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. is chairman of the Republican National Committee.

LINO A. GRAGLIA

I would like to recommend *Economic Analysis of Law* (Little, Brown, 1986, 3rd ed.) by Richard A. Posner, Judge at the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

The "law and economics" movement, urging the application of economic reasoning to legal issues, is by far the most important, if not indeed the only, development in law school teaching and curriculum in the last fifty years. Posner's *Economic Analysis of Law*, first published in 1972, and now in a much expanded and revised third edition, has been the bible of that movement. Written in a clear and jargon-free style, it is a cornucopia of fascinating topics—e.g., Is Inequality Inefficient?, The Taste for Discrimination, The Economic Basis of Freedom of Speech—with something interesting and significant to say about almost every major issue of both private and public law. It is to the law as Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* is to astronomy and Richard Attenborough's *Life on Earth* is to biology.

I also consider it a public service not to miss an opportunity to tout Laurence Sterne's *Tristam Shandy*, easily the best piece of literature that I had not only not read, but had not even heard of upon completing my formal education, and therefore fear it may have escaped the attention of others. I learned of it only because of its inclusion, well-merited, in Adler and Hutchins's *Great Books*. It is hilarious, and everyone should meet Uncle Toby.

Two weeks in the Soviet Union this summer have made me even more interested in and less capable of understanding how so inefficient and frustrating a society can possibly continue to exist—for example, if the people waiting on two-hour lines to buy, say, dish towels were free to make and sell such things, there would be no need to wait on line. Seweryn Bialer's very readable *The Soviet Paradox* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) is an excellent attempt to aid such understanding.

Lino A. Graglia is the Rex G. Baker and Edna Heflin Baker Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Texas School of Law.

RICHARD C. HALVERSON

1. Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, has been producing a series of volumes, entitled *Classics of Faith and Devotion*. Among them are a number of older books. I would like to suggest *Real Christianity* by William Wilberforce, abridged and edited by James M. Houston. This book is recommended because of its relevance and timeliness to the present church/state debate.

2. Harper Brothers, New York City, years ago published a book by Douglas V. Steeres entitled *Doors Into Life*, which is a presentation of five of the preeminent devotional classics of other generations. My own interest in this book is the reminder of how shallow contemporary faith can be and how profound its potential as we are introduced to the thoughts of God's servants of another age.

3. *The Trouble With My Church*, by Helmet Thieliecke (Harper & Row). Thieliecke was one of the strongest voices during the troubled days of the Third Reich and its consequences in Germany. He represents a model of courage and a powerful, prophetic voice in times of trouble and crisis.

4. *Crossroads*, by Leon Jaworski, chief prosecutor of Nazi war crime trials and Watergate (David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois). Here are the profound insights and personal experiences of a thoughtful, influential American.

5. *Christian Countermoves in a Decadent Culture*, by Carl F.H. Henry. Here is another book published by Multnomah Press. In another of its excellent series of the critical concern books, Carl Henry is not only a leading (if not the leading) evangelical theologian of the past three decades, he more than any other has been sensitive to the inadequacies of contemporary evangelicalism to respond to social crisis. This is a new book which begs to be read.

Richard C. Halverson is chaplain of the United States Senate and author of No Greater Power: Perspectives for Days of Pressure, *published earlier this year by Multnomah Press.*

PETER HANNAFORD

Hidden Power, by Maurice Tobin. If you have wondered why Congress talks so much and accomplishes so little, the author, a Washington lawyer and one-time Capitol Hill legislative assistant, may have the answer: the erosion of the seniority system. Whatever its faults, he says, the seniority system gave structure and discipline to federal lawmaking. Today, especially in the House of Representatives, it has given way to a power vacuum which, at times, all 435 members try to fill. Good reading for students of government and for taxpayers.

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In Search of the Trojan War, by Michael Wood. Based on a BBC television series, this book is a time machine, moving the reader back to a period between 1300 and 1200 B.C., when the powerful Myceneans from Greece were expanding both their trading and their political influence. The author, a discerning layman when it comes to archeology, makes a convincing case that the Myceneans overran the Minoans on Crete and did Troy in. With the patience of a Sherlock Holmes, he helps us identify the layer of that hill in Western Turkey that was almost certainly the Troy of the Trojan war. We also meet the Hittites, who presided over a vast kingdom in Anatolia and had as sophisticated a foreign service as one encounters today.

Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans, by Alan Riding. The author, for several years the *New York Times*'s man in Mexico City, understands our sometimes puzzling neighbors to the south and why they are unlike any other people in the Americas. For those in this country who wonder why Mexico doesn't shape its institutions as replicas of our own, the author has this to say: "On the ruins of a long line of theocratic and militaristic empires, Cortez imposed the values of a profoundly Catholic and intellectually repressed Spain. The conquest therefore reinforced a powerful tradition of political authoritarianism and divine omnipotence that to this day resists the incursions of Western liberalism."

The Liberal Crack-Up, by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. Another year has nearly gone by without a single new idea from the liberals. Not that they have been silent: they went in for much breast-beating over Ronald Reagan's Supreme Court nominees and they argue against SDI and aid to the contras with such persistence as to suggest that they believe that our best national defense is a ration of hatpins and slingshots for every man, woman, and child. They had a victory of sorts: with the passage of sanctions against South Africa, they proved there is an issue over which one can be hysterical without much fear of criticism. I turned once again to RET's tour de force on the subject of liberalism to refresh my memory as to why the pieties of liberal orthodoxy continue to have such a strong grip on some Americans. The answers are all there in 232 pages of very lively writing.

Peter Hannaford is chairman of the board of a public relations/public affairs firm. He is the author of The Reagans: A Political Portrait *(Coward McCann) and* Talking Back to the Media *(Facts on File Books).*

OWEN HARRIES

I haven't yet read Anthony Kerrigan's new translation of Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* (Notre Dame Press), but its appearance provides a reminder of this rather neglected conservative classic. A short book (a mere 144 small pages in the old, anonymous translation), it is full of brilliant insights and epigrams. Samples: "The European stands alone, without any living ghost by his side . . . he has lost his shadow"; "the vertical invasion of the barbarians"; "the mob goes in search of bread, and the means it employs is generally to wreck the bakeries"; "civilization is nothing else than the attempt to reduce force to being the *ultima ratio* . . . 'direct action' consists in inverting the order and proclaiming violence as *prima ratio.*"

Reading Ortega on the twentieth century reminds one of Coleridge's description of seeing Edmund Kean act: "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." It is amazing that a Spaniard writing in 1929 should have written the most penetrating analysis of the American counterculture in the 1960s and seventies.

Otherwise the best books I have read this year happened to have been written by neoconservative friends: Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians* (Alfred A. Knopf) and Norman Podhoretz's *The Bloody Crossroads* (Simon and Schuster). Two powerful writers at the top of their form.

Owen Harries is editor of the National Interest.

DON HODEL

William J. Cook, *The Joy of Computer Communication* (Dell Publishing Co). This "how to do it" book on how to communicate between computers using telephone lines is a must for the computer buff who wants help from terminology to equipment to step-by-step procedures.

Phil Gramm, *The Role of Government in a Free Society* (The Fisher Institute, Dallas, Texas). A collection of speeches and articles articulating, with remarkable clarity, solid, conservative philosophy written before the author became United States Senator from Texas.

A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (The Brookings Institution). A useful analysis of the tremendous importance to America of the religious beliefs of its citizens.

Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tenn.). A scholarly assessment of the false gods man chooses to worship and of the beguiling way in which we are seduced away from worshiping the God of Scripture.

Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (Alfred A. Knopf). This biography of the first director of the National Park Service provides insights into the life of a man who saw the need for these living museums and the importance of permitting visitors to enjoy them, while protecting them for future generations.

James G. Watt, *The Courage of a Conservative* (Simon and Schuster). A challenging presentation of conservative philosophy applied to a range of current policy issues.

Don Hodel is the Secretary of the Interior.

JAMES J. KILPATRICK

Let me recommend:

1. *The Straw Giant*, by Arthur Hadley (Random House, $19.95), a hard-hitting look at the state of our defense preparedness. This is a damned important book that deserves a wide audience.

2. *Stranger in Two Worlds*, by Jean Harris (Macmillan, $18.95), an altogether absorbing autobiography of the rise and fall of an interesting woman.

3. *Decision in Philadelphia*, by Christopher Collier and James Lincoln Collier (Random House, $19.95), the best book about the 1787 Convention since Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia*.

4. *Talleyrand*, by J. F. Bernard (Putnam, $12.75). This came out in 1973, but I just got around to reading it this past spring. It's a helluva fine biography.

James J. Kilpatrick is a nationally syndicated columnist.

JACK LIMPERT

Good books to look at:

LIFE: The First Fifty Years, by the editors of *Life* magazine ($50.00, Little, Brown). The safest gift book of 1986.

Ansel Adams: Classic Images ($29.95, New York Graphic Society). Seventy-six of the best examples of a great photographer's work.

Yquem, by Richard Olney with photographs by Michael Guillard ($45.00, David R. Godine). An appreciation of what many think is the greatest white wine in the world. The photographs are beautiful, the words full of affection.

American Watercolors, by Christopher Finch ($85.00, Abbeville). Almost 300 reproductions in color, featuring Homer, Sargent, Marin, Hopper, and others.

Gilbert Stuart: The Father of American Portraiture, by Richard McLanathan ($35.00, Abrams/National Museum of American Art). A readable biography of the noted portraitist with 50 color reproductions.

Good books to read:

The Wise Men, by Walter, Isaacson and Evan Thomas ($22.95, Simon and Schuster). The best Washington book of 1986, this is a long, intelligent look at Dean Acheson, Averell Harriman, Robert Lovett, John McCloy, George Kennan, and Charles Bohlen, establishment figures who shaped American policy after World War II. Especially interesting is the account of how Averell Harriman pushed Dean Acheson to turn President Lyndon Johnson around on Vietnam in March of 1968. Not long after, LBJ announced he would not run for reelection, and the relationship between the White House and the establishment has never been the same since.

Eisenhower: At War 1943-45, by David Eisenhower ($29.95, Random House). Ike's grandson and Julie Nixon's husband has surprised a lot of Washingtonians by writing an authoritative, interesting account of Dwight Eisenhower's performance as World War II general. The story of why General Eisenhower didn't go for Berlin is fascinating.

The Wild Blue, by Walter J. Boyne and Steven L. Thompson ($19.95, Crown). A fast-moving novel that tells the history of the U.S. Air Force from its start in 1947 to flights into space. Great fun for anyone who loves airplanes.

My Father, My Son, by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr. and Lieutenant Elmo Zumwalt III with John Pekkanen ($18.95, Macmillan). The admiral gave the order to use Agent Orange in Vietnam, his son fought his way through the poisoned countryside, and then the son came down with two kinds of cancer. A very human story full of different kinds of courage.

New American Classics, by Jeremiah Tower ($27.95, Harper & Row). A cookbook that is long on flavor and substance by a chef who has a degree in architecture from Harvard. Clearly written and a gift that would be welcomed by any experienced home cook.

Jack Limpert is editor of Washingtonian *magazine.*

NEIL C. LIVINGSTONE

It was one year ago, two days after Christmas, that terrorists struck at the Rome and Vienna airports in seemingly coordinated attacks, leaving 128 dead and injured. The terrorists were linked to Abu Nidal's shadowy Black June organization. Now there is a book which explores Nidal's demented mind and the activities of his vicious band of followers. While not exactly in the spirit of the season, *The Master Terrorist: The True Story Behind Abu Nidal* (Adama Books, 1986) is relevant reading for anyone seeking information about Nidal and a better understanding of the terrorist phenomenon. →

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On the other hand, one book on terrorism to pass up (or if someone gives a copy to you, to use one page at a time in the family outhouse) is *The Specialist: Revelations of a Counterterrorist* (Stein & Day, 1985) by "Gayle Rivers." Rivers is to counterterrorism what Clifford Irving was to Howard Hughes.

Once a Warrior King (McGraw-Hill, 1985), David Donovan's haunting personal reminiscence about Vietnam, qualifies as my "book of the year." I have already given several copies to friends and relatives and will surely give more this holiday season. There is a lyrical quality to Donovan's writing, and both his style and subject matter recall Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.*

If you take joy, as I do, in the craft of writing, then stand back in awe of *Rain or Shine* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), Cyra McFadden's bittersweet story of her rough-and-tumble adolescence as the only child of a hell-raising rodeo announcer and a self-centered dancer, whose infidelities, boozing, and stormy domestic life form the backdrop to her memoir. No pretentious piece of feminist self-realization literature, *Rain or Shine* is, along with Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*, the best read of the year.

While on the subject of Western writers, being a Montanan I always make sure my gift list includes a few books that capture the spirit and heritage of the American West. They are also the kind of books designed to produce a double take when gingerly unwrapped by my citified Eastern friends. And if you really want to have fun, give one to a Japanese business acquaintance. Old standbys in this category include Spike Van Cleve's *40 Years' Gatherin's* (The Lowell Press, 1977), David Dary's *Cowboy Culture* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), Norman Maclean's *The River Runs Through It* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), Bill Stockton's *Today I Baled Some Hay to Feed the Sheep the Coyotes Eat* (Falcon Press, 1983), and my perennial favorite, *The Sea of Grass* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), Conrad Richter's epic clash of cattlemen and homesteaders.

Finally, let me wholeheartedly offer up *Honorable Member* (Patrick Stephens Ltd.) which, despite the title, does not concern the male anatomy but rather is a witty and erudite account of how the British parliament works and the trials and tribulations of a young Tory, albeit "wet," M.P.

Neil C. Livingstone is president of the Institute for Terrorism and Subnational Conflict in Washington, D.C.

EDMUND MORRIS

The new book which has caused me the purest delight this year is a glossy compendium from Abrams, *Krazy Kat: the Comic Art of George Herriman.* Inevitably, it is more a biography of Krazy than of the self-effacing genius who created him, but the reproductions prove (if proof be needed) that the gulf between Herriman and all other comic artists is unbridgeable.

I have also manhandled, for the last time I fear, a paperback edition of Mann's *Magic Mountain* which is now in so many fragments that a sneeze would scatter it. The most ragged page of all is that upon which Mme. Chauchat, masked, addresses the word *tu* to Hans Castorp for the first time: surely the most erotic moment in twentieth-century fiction.

Other novels I read again were J. L. Carr's *A Month in the Country* (Academy Chicago, 1984), and A. J. Mojtabai's *Autumn* (Houghton Mifflin, 1982), both slender, exquisitely written, and agonizing in their descriptions of love cut short—the former by youth, the latter by old age. If *American Spectator* readers have not yet discovered Molly Keane (*Good Behavior, Time After Time*) I envy the delight in store for them: she is an Anglo-Irish writer as poetic as Keats and as savage as Evelyn Waugh (Obelisk 1983; Knopf, 1985).

For humor, I laughed myself into paroxysms over Christopher Buckley's *The White House Mess* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1986)—the funniest book since Mary Cunningham's memoirs.

Edmund Morris won the Pulitzer Prize and American Book Award for The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt. *He is at work on a sequel,* Theodore Rex. *In 1985 he was designated President Reagan's official biographer.*

RICHARD NIXON

I would recommend two recent books for Christmas time readers:

The first is David Eisenhower's definitive, monumental work about his grandfather's service as Supreme Commander in World War II, *Eisenhower: At War.* It is the first truly great biography of Eisenhower. Many readers are apt to be intimidated by its 900 pages, but I would urge them to take the time to read it rather than let it languish on their coffee tables. There is no better account of those pivotal 18 months in world history nor of the role of the one man who was indispensable to victory.

I would also recommend Gene Smith's dual biography *Lee and Grant.* Smith's book about Woodrow Wilson has always been one of my favorites, and I was not disappointed by this volume. It is a must for Civil War buffs, and in fact I have given it as gifts to several—including the New York Mets' first baseman, Keith Hernandez.

Richard Nixon was the 37th President of the United States.

R. RANDOLPH RICHARDSON

Democracy, Capitalism, and Socialism, Joseph Schumpeter. Anyone who's serious about understanding the politics, economics, and culture of the U.S. and the major Western states can do no better than read the middle third of this seminal product of the scholarship of genius. It's an explanation of forces shaping the present and a prescient forecast of our future. And at least this middle third is essential reading for anyone bold enough to think he can improve our tomorrows by giving away money today.

In My Time, Robert Strausz-Hupé. This is the autobiography of one of America's brightest foreign affairs scholars. Scion of a leading Viennese family of the empire period, Robert was educated to follow many distinguished forbears into high governmental position. He arrived penniless in the U.S. in the 1920s, his education largely irrelevant, made money on Wall Street and married much more of it to live as a fox-hunting aristocrat in the suburbs of Philadelphia. In the 1950s, he organized and led the Foreign Policy Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, assembling the best and brightest scholars to begin demolition of the main underpinnings of the liberal foreign policy establishment. Robert is a tad too much the rascal to tell readers much about his personal life, but his observations on the foreign policies of all the Western nations and the Soviets from the 1920s through the middle fifties rank with those in Paul Johnson's *Modern Times.* Robert, now 80-plus, is currently U.S. Ambassador to some garden spot or other in Southeast Asia.

Modern Times, Paul Johnson. Anyone who hasn't read this should be dropped from *The American Spectator*'s subscription list. Also worth the effort, his *History of Christianity*, wherein one learns that, save for a very few clerics, Christianity hasn't done much to change human nature.

R. Randolph Richardson is president of the Smith Richardson Foundation in New York.

HENRY SALVATORI

Confiscated Power by Hélène Carrère D'Encausse is undoubtedly one of the most informative and enlightening books that has ever been written about the Soviet Union and its Communist system of government.

The author clearly depicts how the Soviet Union is organized and functions and how the Party dominates every aspect of Soviet life and government.

As long as the Soviet Union, in order to ensure the long-term survival of its totalitarian rule, continues to be explicitly and totally dedicated to the extinction of our free democratic society, it behooves every concerned citizen to clearly understand the true nature of our formidable and totalitarian adversary.

As stated in the jacket, the author "has the knowledge of a scholar, the pen of a journalist, and the eye of a de Tocqueville."

I strongly agree.

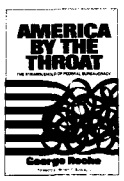
Henry Salvatori is the founder and former CEO of Western Geophysical Co., now a subsidiary of Litton Industries.

JOHN R. SILBER

Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares, by Armando Valladares (Alfred A. Knopf). Reviewers have compared Valladares's achievement to that of Alexander Solzhenitsyn; indeed, Valladares writes of a Cuban Gulag which rivals the Soviet system in injustice, human degradation, and brutality—in everything, in fact, except in scale. For those still beguiled by the romance of the Cuban revolution, this poet's book is required reading.

The Capitalist Revolution, by Peter L. Berger (Basic Books). This book, by one of the world's most respected social

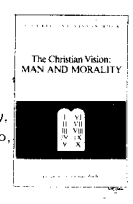
Hillsdale College Press.
Each **$5.00 in paperback.**



A devastating account of the growth of bureaucracy by Hillsdale College President George Roche, former chairman of the government agency, the National Council on Educational Research.

William Bennett, Joseph Sobran, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Sidney Hook, Melvin Lasky, Peter Berger, and Michael Novak

Raymond Gastil, Richard Derham, Lewis Engman, Nancy Sherwood Truitt, Mark Frazier, Melvyn Krauss, and Kendall Brown



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scientists, contains the strongest analysis and defense to date of the economic and social order that distinguishes our society and its underlying moral and practical principles, of which many of our intelligentsia are painfully ignorant.

Essays in the History of Liberty: Selected Writings of Lord Acton, edited by J. Rufus Fears (Liberty Press). As the editor notes, "Lord Acton's powerfully original analysis of the nature of individual and political freedom and of the forces that foster and threaten that freedom speaks to the most profound concern of the late 20th Century." This book should renew interest in a seminal figure in the intellectual history of freedom.

John R. Silber is president of Boston University.

HERBERT STEIN

I suppose it would be unsporting for me to list *Her Only Sin*, by Benjamin Stein, *Biz Speak*, by Rachel Stein Epstein and Nina Liebman, and *Washington Bedtime Stories*, by Herbert Stein as the three top books of 1986. I will therefore go to the next highest level:

Conservatism: Dream or Reality, by Robert Nisbet. The best and, I hope, the last word on what conservatism is. Now maybe the "conservatives" can turn to trying to solve some problems.

Eisenhower: At War, 1943-1945, by David Eisenhower. Coping with one ally who is your enemy and one ally who is your rival to defeat one enemy who will be your ally.

Amusing Ourselves to Death, by Neil Postman. How TV is undermining democracy by converting what should be serious discussion into show business.

Herbert Stein is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

CAL THOMAS

Crime and Its Victims: What We Can Do, by Daniel W. Van Ness (InterVarsity Press, 1986). Like the weather, the solution to crime and the burgeoning prison population has seemed to elude the experts. But Dan Van Ness returns to the legal and moral codes of ancient civilizations and makes a strong case for restitution, not imprisonment, for nonviolent offenders. It is an important book because of the growing cost of crime in America to the taxpayer and to the victims.

Mere Christianity, by C. S. Lewis. A classic by the late English writer who held the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance English Literature at Cambridge until shortly before his death on November 22, 1963. The book is the ultimate fusion of intellect and spirituality and is a challenge to those who think they are intelligent enough to have concluded that God does not exist.

The Gulag Archipelago, by Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn. The book that Ronald Reagan ought to read or reread before any more meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev. Solzhenitsyn brilliantly chronicles the mutation of Communism in the midst of the Russian people and demonstrates with overwhelming testimony of many of its victims that no matter who is at the head of the Soviet government, nothing has changed, or will change.

The Bible (do you really need the author of this one?). Lincoln mastered it, Presidents take their oath on it, whether they read it or not. It consistently outsells all other books, yet most of the intellectual elite have never read it, much less understood it. What better time than Christmas, for whatever reason, to resolve to read it through in a year, which takes about five chapters per day.

Cal Thomas is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate and a commentator for National Public Radio.

R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

A Stroll with William James, by Jacques Barzun, is a learned rendering of the life and thought of a man whose nostrums for our time are as sound as they are, alas, unthinkable. The dolts would not stand for him.

Difficult Loves, by Italo Calvino, is now in paperback. His exquisitely told tales of ordinary people exude just enough mystery to intrigue and no trace of the fakery characteristic of so much modern fiction.

Talking Back to the Media, by Peter Hannaford, is more than a manual on how one responds when cornered by Caliban. It is an excellent guide to the media, embracing 169 pages of very lively writing.

Novus Ordo Seclorum, by Forrest McDonald, is a singular and eminently useful account of the Republic's founding as we observe the two hundredth anniversary of the Constitution.

History of the People of the United States, by John Bach McMaster, was published between 1883 and 1913 in eight volumes, now obtainable only in a good second-hand book store; and if anyone has the last four volumes I shall pay hard cash for them. With unscotchable optimism McMaster tells the whole improbable tale, unfettered by any of the New Age bugaboos that make so much modern American history tedious and for normal minds inscrutable.

The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA, by John Ranelagh, is a very competent history of the evolution of the Central Intelligence Agency up to the end of the Carter Administration, whereupon the book simply blows up. Possibly the author's sources in the intelligence community do not want the KGB to know that the present custodian of Yankee intelligence is one of the planet Earth's superior beings.

Against All Hope, by Armando Valladares, is the most impressive recent indictment of the totalitarian brutes whom Dr. Marx sanctified. If I were allowed to send only one book to my friends this season, this would be it.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., is the editor-in-chief of The American Spectator.

JOHN UPDIKE

Some books that occur to me are: *The Assault*, by the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch; *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood; and *Sevastapol Sketches* by Leo Tolstoy. All deal with violence, yet share a certain poetry and calm intelligence as well. The Tolstoy, for one who thought he had read the best of this writer, was a revelation.

John Updike is the author of Roger's Version *and other books.*

JACK VALENTI

Current: *The Reckoning*, by David Halberstam, an account of what happens when a great nation (USA) takes quality and meaningful work lightly and magnifies stock prices and short-term earnings, a dramatic narrative that has the crack-and-dash of a thriller novel.

Not so current: *Talleyrand*, by Duff Cooper, maybe the most fascinating biography of them all, elegantly composed about history's most charming rascal, rogue, diplomat, and political survivor.

Great Contemporaries, by Winston Churchill, which I would select if I went into exile and could take only two books with me.

Go to your library to get *Little Journeys into the Homes of Great Philosophers*, by Elbert Hubbard (don't worry if people say "Elbert Who?"). I guarantee you delightful reading about some most interesting folks who are called philosophers.

Disraeli, by André Maurois, in print as a Modern Library book. My favorite public man etched so delightfully, so excitedly by Maurois. A joy to read, and reread.

Essays, by Lord Macaulay. The ones on Samuel Johnson, Francis Bacon, Warren Hastings, in particular, and his *History of England*, specifically chapter one, which in my Everyman's Library version runs to 109 irresistible pages.

Jack Valenti is president and chief executive officer of the Motion Picture Association of America.

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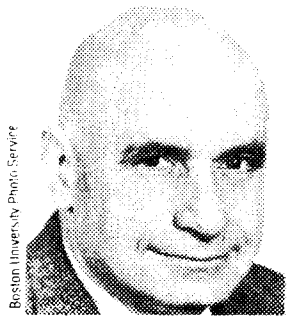

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S.D.I. DEPLOYMENT AND HISTORY

by Gregory A. Fossedal

Sometime in the coming months, Ronald Reagan will decide whether or not the United States will build early layers of a strategic defense, or Star Wars shield, against nuclear weapons, within this century. That he will make this decision is not widely known, but it is a fact.

For one thing, Mr. Reagan has requested various reports on the feasibility of near-term deployment from his own science adviser, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and from the Pentagon's SDI office. The proposal to announce and initiate a Star Wars deployment in Reagan's term already has the support of the program's leading proponents in the scientific and political communities.[1] Among those who signed an October 2 letter to the President calling for rapid deployment are: Alexander Haig, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Allen, Eugene Rostow, Herbert Stein, Jack Kemp, James Courter, Malcolm Wallop, Dan Quayle, Ernest Hollings, Rudy Boschwitz, and a dozen other SDI supporters in Congress. Also signed on were the top scientists who support Star Wars: Lowell Wood, Edward Teller, Robert Jastrow, Fred Seitz, and Greg Canavan.

On the darker side, the Administration has already proposed postponing until 1996 even beginning construction of a defense. At the least, this formulation suggests that Mr. Reagan has contemplated extending the 1972 ABM treaty banning effective defense when he conducts his final five-year review of the pact next fall. Given the difficult politics of reversing even a hazy extension of a freeze on defense, and the inertia of the Pentagon's twenty-year procurement cycle, it is hard to imagine deployments before the year 2000 without a start by Reagan.

Mr. Reagan's courageous dealings in Iceland seem to indicate he is moving toward a decision to deploy. After all, if Star Wars truly can bear no fruit for ten years or more, why reject out of hand a Soviet offer to tear up most nuclear weapons in exchange for limits on SDI not radically different from those Mr. Reagan himself proposed in July? Events in Iceland, and my own sources, suggest that Mr. Reagan had more in mind than merely evading the total demolition of strategic defense demanded by Gorbachev. He seeks, instead, a way to make the shift of strategies from offense and retaliation to defense and protection a permanent fact of U.S. politics. The only way to do so is to leave behind actual systems, the start of a first layer or two of a shield that will some day be several layers thick.

Yet while Mr. Reagan's political body language is clear, defense retains powerful opponents. True, the band of scientists and leaders cited above say America can and must proceed with Star Wars deployments. For each supporter, however, one could name a legion of important scientists, politicians, and Mr. Reagan's own aides who say such a course is technologically unsound, politically risky, and strategically provocative toward the Soviets. Faced with such broad and bitter division among experts about the basic facts, how can a President be expected to plow ahead with construction of such a controversial set of defenses?

History answers. For in facing this choice, Mr. Reagan is not unique. Several of this century's great leaders arrived at just such a decision amidst a similar tempest of confusion. Winston Churchill's tireless advocacy of air defense from the mid-1930s on, the salvation of Britain, is an oft-cited example of technological insight saving the day. Several aspects of that episode, though, bear emphasis.

For Churchill faced a problem similar to that posed by today's dogma of Mutual Assured Destruction. Defenses were available; few disputed that. But the defenses available would be imperfect, and hence, it was argued, useless. A few firebombs, said one member of Parliament, could result in "a total holocaust." Prime Minister Baldwin wasn't against defense per se, but saw little point in building when "the bomber will always get through."

Churchill reasoned that if the prospect of German city attacks could arouse such fear, some defense was all the more imperative. Operating as a back-bencher, he managed to secure research funds for exotic technologies such as radar. His advocacy convinced the government to appoint him, in 1935, to a special air defense committee outside the regular Air Ministry bureaucracy. Construction of early parts of the defense, including human spotting stations along the Channel and small air defense batteries, began that year.

Why the rush? Churchill knew that, politically and bureaucratically, doing something soon was the key to doing more later. "In these matters, when the need is fully explained by the military and political authorities, Science is always able to provide something," he wrote on June 7, 1935. Days later: "General tactical considerations and what is technically feasible act and react upon one another. Thus, the scientists should be told what facilities the air force would like to have, and airplane design be made to fit into and implement a definite scheme of warfare."

Obviously, these maxims would not have held if Churchill had been asking for, say, a special device to force German subs to the surface by boiling the seas. But Churchill knew radar and other defenses were evolving rapidly. Unlike other politicians, he took the time to meet with obscure, independent scientists, such as Frederick Lindemann, who claimed air defense could be deployed immediately. He did not trust the information filtering to him through the anti-defense Air Ministry.

A similar dynamic had led Churchill, in 1915, to advocate construction of what he called, because they had no name, "a number of steam tractors with small armored shelters, in which men and machine guns would be placed, which would be made bullet proof." Such a vehicle, he argued, could puncture barbed wire and heavy fire and put an end to the terrible carnage of the trenches.

Churchill's orginal memo went to Lord Kitchener, who had little interest in "Winston's folly" and passed it to lower-level army technocrats. Unflapped, Navy Minister Churchill set up his own research effort. To keep the Germans and Kitchener in the dark, the craft was described as a "land ship" to carry water to the Czar's troops in Russia. Later the term was changed to "tank."

Even when tests proved individual tanks feasible in 1916, the army resisted, pointing out that the workability of single units did not prove the tank could be used in battle on muddy fields. Stubborn commanders didn't use the tank properly, insisting on combining it in small waves with clumsy cavalry movements, and British manufacturers, sensing a lack of interest, never produced an effective design.

Fortunately, by 1917, French politicians who had cautiously deferred to their own army experts were fed up. They allowed Clemenceau to reform military organization and production around the tank and other mobile artillery. Arriving British and American forces were mostly equipped, historian William McNeill reports, by the factories of Renault. By 1918, Churchill's concept was ready for its fair test. The result, though mitigated by reluctant execution, was devastating. British troops moved through wide gaps in the German defenses, breaking through the sacred Hindenburg line on August 8 at Amiens. Writes A.J.P. Taylor: "Amiens shattered the faith in victory which, until that moment, carried the Germans forward." Luddendorf called it "the black day of the German Army."

[1]See my "Is SDI Now Moving on a Faster Track?" *Washington Times*, October 10, 1986.

Gregory A. Fossedal is media fellow at the Hoover Institution and a contributing editor of Harper's.

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Tragically, it was the Germans who absorbed mobility's lesson between the wars. So did an obscure French officer, who in 1932 and 1934 published a collection of lectures and papers he had ghost-written for Marshal Pétain: Charles de Gaulle.

De Gaulle railed against the cult of "orthodoxy" that grew out of the first war and called for the creation of a swift, mobile force capable of striking at German supply lines. A bill was introduced in parliament to fund deployment, but as one general commented, "It would be folly. . . . We have spent millions on the Maginot Line," the ring of forts designed to shield France from a German invasion.

It's unfortunate that many writers today misstate the error of the Maginot Line in terms of a reliance on "defense" against "offense." For in most respects, it is proponents of MAD orthodoxy who resemble the French establishment battling for the Maginot Line. MAD, like the Maginot Line, relies on an obsolescing technology. MAD, like the Maginot Line, assumes—correctly—that the nation will not support an offensive strategy. The point is, as in 1930s France, our deterrent forces rely too much on a single technology. Our offensive missiles and bombers, unshielded like our cities, resemble the French forts and towns, fixed and undefended by the strike force—an active defense to strike at German communications and supply lines—advocated by de Gaulle.

Seeking a leakproof Maginot defense, France neglected vital active defense measures. "Could an elite army of 100,000 men have saved France in 1940?" writes de Gaulle biographer Alexander Werth. "One may doubt it. . . . What is certain, however, is that if at least part of such a striking force had been available in 1936, it could have prevented Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland, and so the war itself."

By a similar sleight of history, Star Wars opponents cite Dwight Eisenhower's warnings about the Military-Industrial Complex as an indication that Ike would be against such technological risk-taking. Yet in a now-ignored section of that speech, Eisenhower warned of an equal danger from a Military-Scientific Complex that might ossify strategic thinking and make weapons subject to a veto by technical elites out to displace what they see as an ignorant public and Congress. (Ike thus foresaw the Union of Concerned Scientists.)

And Ike's actions speak louder than out-of-context quotations. On taking office in 1953, he learned the Soviets were on the verge of making an intercontinental missile, or ICBM. Along with nuclear warheads, these missiles would leave America's cities and military forces open to a devastating attack.

In his memoirs, Ike speaks of "inadequate funding" and "interservice rivalries" as inhibiting the U.S. program. These were present, but so were deep scientific divisions. Robert Oppenheimer opposed Edward Teller's push to produce an immensely powerful bomb needed to make the inaccurate missiles workable. Others doubted an ICBM could even function. Nobel prize winner Vannebar Bush had said: "There has been a great deal said about a 3,000 mile rocket. In my opinion such a thing is impossible for many years."

Who was right? Ike shrewdly appointed a team of ICBM enthusiasts to report on the issue, selecting John von Neumann as head. The von Neumann report, plus a similar paper by the Rand Corporation, tipped the scales. In 1955 Eisenhower demanded an ICBM and the services, seeing his interest, scrambled to support the project. By 1960 Ike had deployed not only the ICBM, but a nuclear-powered submarine armed with similar missiles.

Ike's bold action to build—not research—the ICBM helped make possible the decision by John F. Kennedy to send men to the moon. For it was another ICBM proponent, Werner von Braun, who played a key role in winning JFK.

Kennedy's top advisers, led by scientist Jerome Wiesner, saw no way to outdo the Russians in space. A blue-ribbon panel headed by Wiesner suggested that the United States "stop advertising" the manned space program as important, as it was "very unlikely" we could place a man in orbit, let alone on the moon, in the decade. "Instead, we should find effective means to make people appreciate the cultural, public service, and military impact" of a lesser program.

Wiesner was correct that the two conventional options would take years and cost much. Von Braun, however, saw a third, near-term option: a lunar-orbit rendezvous that could be built within the decade and didn't require the massive booster of direct ascent to the moon itself.

Von Braun's view never fully reached the President until the Soviets, shortly after the Bay of Pigs, put cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin into orbit. Kennedy summoned his advisers. One after the other, they pointed to an estimated cost of up to $40 billion (actual cost: $20 billion), and the difficulty even then of winning a space race.

"Is there any place where we can catch them?" a frustrated President asked his can't-do aides. "If somebody can just tell me how to catch up. Let's find somebody—anybody. I don't care if it's the janitor over there, if he knows how."

Kennedy ordered Vice President Lyndon Johnson to call in experts to give their views on "how." Von Braun made his case, and eventually, NASA bought his concept.

Notably, though, it was political leadership that made technical progress possible. When Kennedy moved, "there was no unanimity in the scientific ranks," writes *Time* journalist Hugh Sidey, who attended the critical 1961 meeting. "What was needed was a presidential decision that we should challenge the Russians." Once Kennedy announced our intention to put a man on the moon, "the one important decision—the political decision"—had been made.

For Mr. Reagan to see in today's confusion a compelling argument against deployment would therefore be to misunderstand the proper relation between science and leadership. It would be an abdication of responsibility, like refusing to cut tax rates because "most economists" predict disaster.

The urge of history's great leaders seems to have been just the opposite. Their common instinct was to take any decision they could unto themselves, knowing, as Richard Nixon put it, "that they were at the top for a reason: because they were the best for the job. And, being the best, they were not going to defer to the second-best." Such men, Nixon writes, "assemble the advice of others, but follow their own judgment . . . their own instincts."

Mr. Reagan, then, could do worse than to follow his own instincts on the matter of Star Wars. If his top advisers cannot unite behind a plan to start building defense, there awaits a vast B-team of outside supporters eager to do the job. And, as John Kennedy knew, a President can do an awful lot with the right janitor. □

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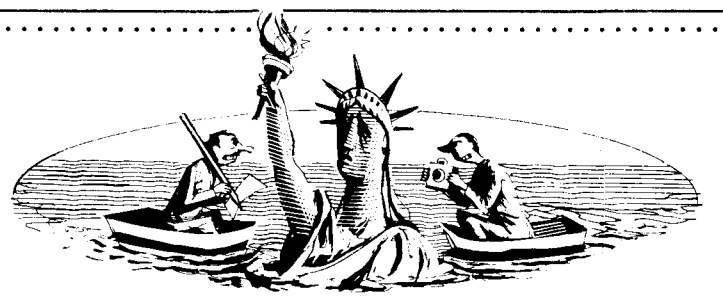

WOODWARD DISINFORMS

by Michael Ledeen

Analyzing the "disinformation" story—launched by that master of the subject, Bob Woodward, in the *Washington Post* on October 2—is a daunting undertaking. By now, the basic premise of Woodward's article (often commented upon, rarely read) has been widely accepted: as the subhead put it, "Elaborate Campaign Included Disinformation That Appeared as Fact in American Media" (that's all eight columns on the top of the first page, folks). The "American Media" referred to by Woodward was primarily the *Wall Street Journal*, which had run a front-page story by James Walcott and Gerald Seib on August 25, alleging that Libya and the United States were on a "collision course," since the U.S. had discovered that Qaddafi was preparing new acts of terrorism. In Woodward's view, citing a secret White House memorandum and the usual collection of unidentified sources, that story was false in all major details. And the media screamed bloody murder:

•"We should leave that garbage to the Russians" (A.M. Rosenthal, executive editor of the *New York Times*).

•"It appears that there are some people [in the White House] who think we have to emulate the Soviet Union in order to compete with them" (Senator William Cohen).

•"Americans grow up convinced that their values are different and more enlightened, but when 'disinformation' ceases to be merely a Russian word, the distinctions begin to blur, and a deeply disturbing impression is conveyed to the rest of the world" (Jonathan Alter et al., *Newsweek*).

•"This administration has contempt for the press, from the top right on down" (Jack Nelson, *Los Angeles Times*).

•"The government actually conveyed to reporters things it knew to be false—that opposition to Col. Qaddafi was stirring and that an American attack was on the way" (*Washington Post*).

Indeed, the conviction that the American media had been deliberately misled was so firmly entrenched that just one week later the *New York Times* editorialists (Max Frankel's last editorial comment?) wrote: "It may cross the reader's mind that Americans are learning more of the truth from Managua than Washington while their Government, as in the recently debated case of Libya, engages in disinformation . . ." With such near-unanimity, you might think that the only thing left to discuss is the degree of malfeasance on the part of American government officials, but things are actually quite different; unless I am sadly mistaken, the American public has in fact been the victim of a hoax perpetrated by Mr. Woodward.

Woodward's original claims (which, as we shall see, he drastically modified in a later article) were basically three in number:

1. That false information was planted in American news media, claiming that the United States government had learned that Libya was preparing new acts of terrorism (Woodward claimed that "U.S. intelligence officials had actually concluded in August that Qaddafi was 'quiescent' on the terrorist front").

2. That indeed, most likely as a result of the American "disinformation" campaign, Libya began planning new terrorist acts in September.

3. That false information was provided to the American press, claiming that the Administration was planning "a new and larger bombing of Libya in case the President orders it." Woodward claimed that in fact "the administration only had contingency plans for new military action that were several months old, and nothing new was being done."

Every one of Woodward's claims is false. There was indeed information showing that Qaddafi was preparing new acts of terrorism, and while there are always people in the American government who challenge any given interpretation of the basic data, most of the senior officials who work on this subject agreed that there was every good reason for serious concern.

Worse still, in an attempt to buttress his case against the government, Woodward tore a crucial phrase totally out of context. While he wrote, early in the story, that Qaddafi was judged to be "quiescent," the actual phrase in the White House document gives a quite different impression: "Although the current intelligence community assessment is that Qaddafi is temporarily quiescent in his support of terrorism, he may soon move to a more active role." For those who know how to read, that means that the information showed that Qaddafi was about to *abandon* his "temporary quiescence." Thus the concern. To read it otherwise is to accuse Admiral John Poindexter of misleading, not the American media, but his boss Ronald Reagan.

This means that claim no. 2 is also false; indeed, it is the most vicious piece of disinformation in the entire article, for it suggests that the *real* cause of Qaddafi's resumption of terrorism in September was the United States. As usual, we have the unnamed "source who considered the August initiatives potentially dangerous" who provided Woodward with the perfect quotable quote: "There's a fine line between harassment and provocation."

Those readers who have been with me for the past few months will recognize this as part of a pattern. Month after month, a variety of *Post* correspondents has striven mightily to imply, infer, and otherwise convey the impression that Qaddafi is not a serious threat, that any American action against Libya will only provoke Qaddafi to even greater excesses, and that Reagan's refusal to seek *rapprochement* with Libya is at least as much a cause of Libyan-sponsored terrorism as is Qaddafi's own passion. Woodward has been one of the major sponsors of this world-view, which he has advanced largely through the use of leaked, top-secret documents dealing with covert American programs aimed at Libya. So the theme that "America provoked Libya" is not new for Woodward.

That leaves us with claim no. 3, and Woodward is wrong again. For there

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were a variety of options and plans being studied throughout the American government in August and September, not just the old programs. And I don't know anyone close to the President who believes anything other than what the *Journal* said: if the Libyans had been caught engaged in further acts of terrorism against American targets, the American response would have been more vigorous than it had been last April.

So the *Wall Street Journal* story was correct in all basic details. If the authors erred, it was in dramatizing the degree to which the American government was committed to a single course of action (the "collision course"). It would have been more accurate to have said that *if* Qaddafi carried out the acts he seemed to be contemplating, there would be a "collision."

What, then, remains of the claim of disinformation? Precious little, as Woodward himself acknowledged in his next effort, on October 6. After describing yet another classified document (this time from the State Department), Woodward wandered all around the subject, and finally described the *actual policy adopted* vis-à-vis Libya: " . . . the only deception was to be directed abroad and at Qaddafi." In other words, contrary to all the headlines, the *Post*'s own editorials, the explosions of righteous indignation from the media community, and even the bizarre resignation of State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb, the chief inquisitor himself granted that there was no disinformation aimed at the American media. Woodward was left quoting yet another unnamed official to the effect that the *Journal* had been misled by a "Lone Ranger operation."

This is a far cry from the original claims, and even *it* is wrong, since the *Journal* wasn't misled. It wasn't even mistaken. But no one felt like pointing out Woodward's retraction; the media pack had been unleashed against the Administration, and its blood lust was not about to be turned off. Meanwhile, the Administration's reaction was not clear at all: while the President correctly denied any deception of American reporters, the Secretary of State on occasion seemed to confirm the claim: "I know of no decision to have people go out and tell lies to the media. I think, however, that if there are ways in which we can make Qaddafi nervous, why shouldn't we?"

Fair enough, but George Shultz should have been a lot tougher with those who were screaming "disinformation." The apparent divergence between his words and those of the President hurt the Administration and encouraged journalists to continue their assault.

What does it all mean? There were several forces at work, least of which was the profound jealousy between the *Post* and the *Journal*. It was common knowledge in Washington that *Post* editors were enraged at being scooped by the *Journal*, and the Woodward story was clearly aimed in part against his competitors at the other newspaper. But the basic passion was the one we've seen before: the desire to shape American foreign policy. The Woodward stories, like those in the past, put the burden for the conflict with Libya on Reagan's shoulders, rather than on Qaddafi's back. If that isn't the real disinformation, what is it?

There is also a problem with scriptural exegesis of official documents. Like many people with little understanding of how government works, Woodward takes internal memoranda as sacred text, providing an absolutely reliable picture of "real policy." There are dozens of reasons for writing a memorandum in the government, and many of these have very little to do with the actual content of American policy. The State Department memo cited by Woodward in his second article, for instance, is a clear example of what I like to call the "pre-emptive policy" memorandum. In essence it says, "do nothing, the situation will take care of itself." For the only "action" recommended by the men and women of the State Department is trying to convince Qaddafi that there are Libyans who don't like him, and that there are signs that even the Russians are thinking of getting rid of him. No "disinformation" is needed in this case, since both statements are true, and Qaddafi knows it—indeed he's known it for quite a long time.

Finally, we are left with the ongoing problem of the *Post*'s passion for the publication of government secrets (and once the media learned that the Administration was trying to find the source of the leaked documents, they condemned it with their usual violence). One can debate the ethics of this question interminably, but the basic fact remains this: No government can effectively design and conduct foreign policy if its private discussions and plans appear in the press. Part of this is because secrecy is sometimes indispensable to the success of policy, and part of it is for a very different reason: if people come to learn that their most private views are going to be published, they will no longer speak their minds. The result of *that* situation is that errors will not be caught at an early stage, and people, instead of saying stupid things, will do them instead.

One of the most interesting footnotes to the Great Disinformation Scandal of 1986 is that the great bulk of letters to the editor at the *Post* were hostile to Woodward. *Post* "ombudsman" Joseph Laitin spoke of "the reader outrage over the *Post*'s publishing Bob Woodward's revelation last week." Laitin was shocked, because he thought that "it is odd that the vehement reaction was to the *Post*'s printing things that were true." They weren't, but the readers couldn't have been expected to know that. The readers were upset at seeing yet another case where government secrets were on the front page of the *Post*. They were right. □

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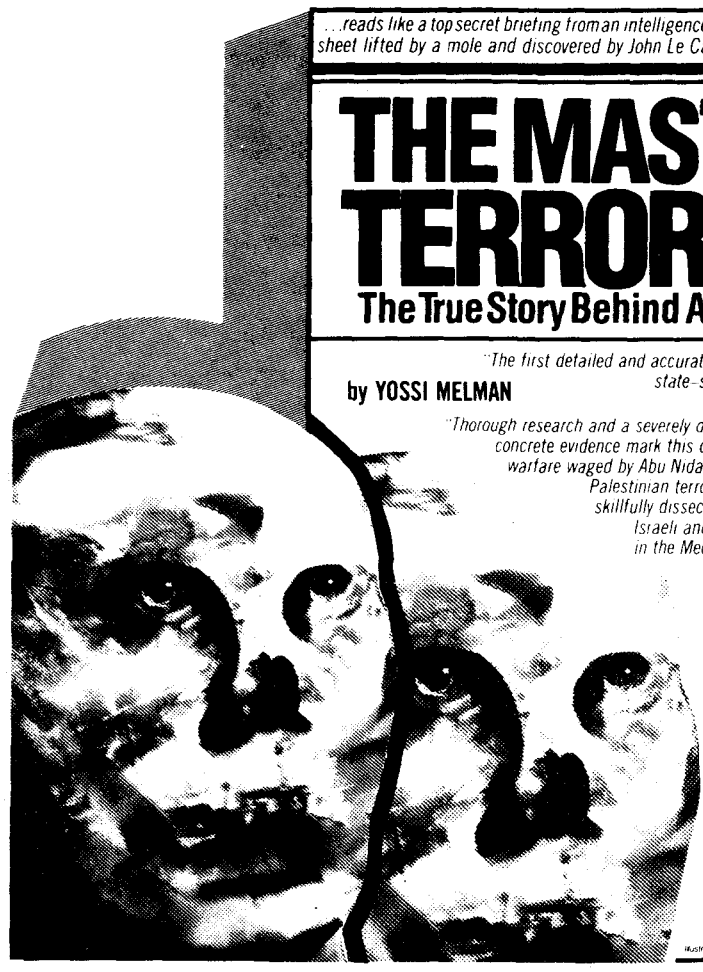

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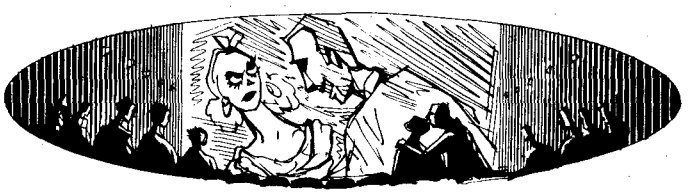

WEIRDOS

by Bruce Bawer

When I look back now, it seems to me that I spent countless hours at college in the mid-seventies sitting in a dormitory room and listening to my friends extol the virtues of a movie called *Eraserhead*. Written and directed by one David Lynch, it seemed always to be playing somewhere on campus. "It's so *weird*," my friends would tell me—*weird*, naturally, being a term of exalted, unqualified praise—"and it's even weirder when you're high." Alas, as one who wasn't interested either in "weird" or in getting high, I never did go to see *Eraserhead*. Nor did I catch Lynch's subsequent films, *Dune* and *The Elephant Man*. (Lynch served only as director on these films; the scripts were the work of other, apparently far less weird, individuals.) So it is that I came to Lynch's new film, *Blue Velvet*, which he both wrote and directed, knowing nothing about this notorious filmmaker except what I had heard.

As far as *Blue Velvet* is concerned, of course, what I had heard—and what most of North America has also doubtless heard by now—is that the film is not only weird but extremely disturbing. It is certainly not a movie for children and—what with the obscenity, the profanity, and the graphic rape, violence, sadomasochism, and mutilation—it may not be a movie for many adults, either. What makes it so disturbing to this viewer, however, is not so much any of these things in and of themselves—which are, in any event, less shocking than the reviews and the scuttlebutt would lead one to expect—as the fact that Lynch manages, in this film, to communicate quite powerfully a moral vision that is utterly despicable.

The film is set in the real-life town of Lumberton, North Carolina, but from the beginning it doesn't *feel* quite like Lumberton, North Carolina (or, for that matter, like Wilmington, North Carolina, where the picture was actually shot). The major characters' accents are wrong, and the atmosphere is wrong too: Lumberton, as Lynch renders it, feels more like a medium-sized Midwestern city than a small Southern burg. The film is supposedly set in the 1980s, but it feels and looks and sounds more like the fifties; the only significant contemporary touch—and significant it unquestionably is, considering that the plot revolves around a severed human ear—is the hero's earring. Everything is just a bit off—and creepily, insidiously so, in a manner reminiscent of the ominous, synthetic American-home-town-on-Mars in Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*.

In the film's opening sequence, Lynch presents Lumberton as a caricature of pure, wholesome, hardworking small-town America. He makes a running surrealistic joke out of the town's name: the call letters of the radio station are W-O-O-D, and lumber trucks keep roaring past in the background while the radio announcer delivers a cheery, hi-ho-hi-ho-it's-off-to-a-day-of-tree-chopping-we-go aubade. This town, clearly, is meant to be perceived as America in microcosm, a place from which, day after day, the Children of Light religiously set forth to tame the dark wilderness. The film's hero, a high-school boy named Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan), lives with his folks in a nice white frame house with a big green lawn and a garden containing big red and yellow flowers under a solid blue sky. This world of primary colors is photographed in bright, even, and shadowless light, with the objects very sharply defined, and the result is that the well-tended flowers and grass are not beautiful but laughable, grotesque, even a bit chilling, as if to indicate that the sort of wholesome, innocent life suggested by this Disneyish setting is nothing but a banal lie, an impossibility; indeed, the perfectly real flowers and grass look positively phony, like the illustrations in a Dick and Jane book.

Significantly, it is not on that excellently maintained, sunshiny lawn but in the shady wild grass outside of Lumberton that Jeffrey—whose father has just suffered a heart attack while watering the lawn—finds a severed human ear. While he holds it in his hand, the camera closes in on it, as if to enter through it (as through a black hole) an alternate universe; and alas, after Jeffrey delivers the ear to a police detective (George Dickerson), it's as if he *has* entered another world, as if *Mary Poppins* had suddenly given way to *Un chien andalu*. He discovers, from the cop's blonde daughter, Sandy (Laura Dern), that a singer named Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini), who sings "Blue Velvet" in a local night spot, is somehow implicated in the case. With Sandy's help, Jeffrey does a little snooping, and finds himself drawn to—and, before long, inextricably involved in—Dorothy's smarmy world. That world, which is symbolized by Dorothy's gloomy brown apartment, is the antithesis of his own; it is as starkly real (though the only sign of nature in Dorothy's flat is a phallically long-stemmed potted plant) as the grounds of Jeffrey's home are fake-looking. Likewise, Dorothy herself, a woman of strong earthy passions, is the opposite of the other young woman in Jeffrey's life, the vapid, antiseptic Sandy. (Incidentally, Dorothy's accent is vaguely European, which seems to suggest that Lynch intends for the two young women to represent a contrast between European experience and American innocence.)

Jeffrey learns that Dorothy is being forced to have sex with a repulsive vulgarian named Frank (Dennis Hopper), who has kidnapped her husband and child. (The ear, apparently, was the husband's.) Taking Dorothy violently on her living room floor, Frank calls her "Mommy" and forces her to call him "Daddy"; he hurts her and she, for her part, manifestly wants to be hurt. Jeffrey, in watching this sadomasochistic encounter from a nearby closet, is effectively witnessing a sort of post-adolescent primal scene; he's an infant all over again, a babe being introduced to a whole new level of sexual awareness. What's most disturbing of all, though, about Frank is that, compared to Jeffrey's unbelievably nice-nice world, this sadistic sicko and his grubby team of conspirators have, for the viewer, an uncomfortable *realness* about them—and it is only a small step from realness to naturalness, from naturalness to rightness. Dorothy, at one point in the film, says, "I know the difference between right and wrong," but the whole purpose of *Blue Velvet* is to confound our sense of right and wrong, to suggest that such distinctions are simpleminded, that what's thought of as "right" can be inhumanly dull and spiritless, and that what's "wrong" can be passionate, vibrant with life. In the logic of this film, indeed, love and evil, passion and violence are essentially one; to feel deeply is to hurt (and to be hurt) deeply; to love is to be obsessed as Frank is obsessed (and as Jeffrey comes to be obsessed) with Dorothy. "You're just like me," Frank tells Jeffrey, and Lynch's implication plainly is that, under the skin, anybody with a capacity for deep emotion is just like Frank; only the bland and affectless, like Sandy—to whom love is a superficial, cheerleaderish entity, lightly bestowed, easily transferred, and powerless to inflict deep or lasting pain—can truly lead productive, orderly, and responsible lives.

Sometimes—for example, when Frank drags Jeffrey, at gunpoint, to a cheap dive where a bizarre little man lip-synchs a pop tune and three fat, garish women stand around watching—the film seems to descend into a broadly campy mode suggestive of John Waters; one has the feeling, at such moments, that Lynch takes nothing seriously, that he is just playing with clichés of black comedy and surrealism and experimenting with pseudo-Felliniesque notions of casting. But on the whole the film succeeds at what it wants to do—which is to say that it is repulsive on a profound level. The conclusion, moreover, is dis-

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Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer and author of* The Middle Generation, *a study of four twentieth-century American poets (Archon Books).*

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quietingly ambiguous: when Sandy's father bursts into Dorothy's blood-spattered apartment, gun in hand, and says, "It's all over now," it's hard to tell whether the ensuing happy ending is supposed to represent what really happens or whether it depicts what goes on in Jeffrey's head in the instant before he dies of a bullet from the cop's gun.

The film brings to mind several of Blake's proverbs of Hell: "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence." "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires." It also recalls *Heart of Darkness*, with its suggestion that we are all capable of doing unspeakable things to one another, that beneath the tame exterior of civilized modern man lurks a primitive beast. But, unlike Conrad's novel, Lynch's film ultimately leaves us not with a highly moral lesson in the possibilities of evil but with a vision of life that is, in fact, morally reprehensible. *Blue Velvet* may be thought of as posing a question: namely, which is more desirable, to settle for a civilized life of vacuous, superficial cheer, or to allow oneself to sink into the pit of cruel, destructive sado-masochistic passion? Lynch leaves the impression that life presents us with only these two alternatives, and that one would have to be less than human not to choose the latter. The catch, needless to say, is that there *are* other alternatives. But the film's awful effectiveness lies in its ability to make us forget that—for the duration, at any rate.

Visually, *Blue Velvet* would make an interesting double bill with Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law*. Jarmusch's film is in stark black and white; its first third is set in the lower-class precincts of New Orleans, its second third in a prison, its last third in the Louisiana wilderness. (Hell, purgatory, heaven?) Both the urban and rural settings are shot in deep focus, with high-contrast dramatic lighting, so that nearly every frame, whether it depicts a slum apartment or the Mississippi delta, looks like an artsy documentary photograph.

Played against this naturalistic background, the film's surreal action seems even more surreal than it might otherwise. Jarmusch's two dense, hapless protagonists are essentially mirror images of one another; Zach (Tom Waits) is a down-on-his-luck DJ, Jack (John Lurie) is a small-time pimp. Both of these lowlifes are lone wolves, too dumb to get anything out of a human relationship; we laugh at their morose self-dramatization, at their tacky ambitions, at the way they let themselves get set up. It is not until they are both thrown in prison for crimes they didn't commit that they meet one another—and a goofy Italian named Roberto (Roberto Benigni) whose relentless cheer and chumminess contrast sharply with their wary, glum demeanor. Yet the three cellmates are compelled to become friends, after a fashion. Though Jarmusch (characteristically) never shows us how they manage it, they break out of prison together and, during their flight through the wilderness, learn to care about each other.

Jack and Zach, however, learn nothing from their experience. While Roberto, in a most unlikely way, stumbles upon love and happiness in the middle of the woods, his two companions, eager to shake one another off, part company and head down identical empty roads to identically barren futures—one on the West Coast, one on the East. Jarmusch (who manages to work Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" into the film—in Italian, yet) wants to make a cynical point about the illusion of choice, wants to tell us that we don't have any real say in our destinies, that Emerson's self-reliance and Whitman's Open Road are myths, that our only buffer against the random and absurd cruelties of fate is the attachments that we

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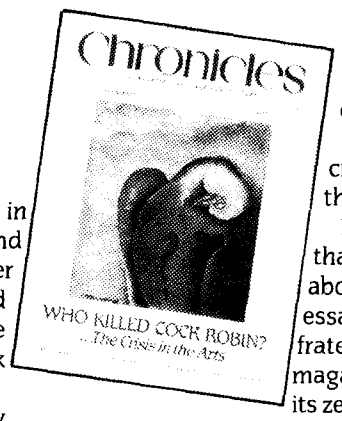

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can form with those whom fate throws in our path. Like Lynch, in short, Jarmusch is out to score a few points against the American dream. But, though the odd tone and the striking photography make *Down by Law* consistently interesting to watch, this stylized, pervasively ironic film leaves the viewer strangely unmoved; it lingers on the mind as an eccentric curiosity, a series of arresting but mute images.

Tough Guys gives us a very different pair of jailbirds. Harry Doyle (Burt Lancaster), 72, and Archie Long (Kirk Douglas), 67, two big-time train robbers, are set free on the streets of L.A. after thirty years in the can. "We ain't changed," Archie says as they leave the Big House in their 1950s-vintage outfits. "The best things never do," Harry replies. But life on the outside *has* changed, and the movie derives most of its humor from our heroes' reactions to new-wave fashion, the fitness craze, gay bars, black street gangs, and the like. It is, in other words, a one-joke movie.

This would not be so bad except for the fact that director Jeff Kanew and writers James Orr and Jim Cruickshank don't keep the joke consistent—sometimes we end up laughing with the tough guys, sometimes at them. It's dishonest: Kanew and company pretend to be making a case for senior citizens' right to self-respect and self-determination, but at the same time they're shamelessly willing to sacrifice their protagonists' dignity for a cheap laugh. You get the feeling, after a certain point in this film, that you care more about the characters than the director and writers do.

As for Lancaster and Douglas, they're the film's strongest assets by far. Even at their least inspired, they have a presence, a magnetism, a way with a line that most of today's young supericons of the screen could never hope to match. Of the two, however, Lancaster creates the more believable character, this time out. Douglas's problem seems to be that he is too embarrassed by his role to throw himself into it entirely. His performance has a self-conscious, noblesse-oblige quality about it; it's the sort of acting job you might imagine him giving in a slapped-together, tongue-in-cheek skit at the Friars Club. He does everything but wink into the camera and say, "Hey, I'm not this pathetic has-been, I'm Kirk Douglas, a big Hollywood wheel, still on the 'A' list after all these years. This is just a picture." Physically, he is in excellent shape, though his face looks a bit strange, as if he's had one too many face-lifts; come to think of it, he looks like somebody wearing a Kirk Douglas mask. At any rate, he certainly doesn't look like a man who's spent the last thirty years in prison.

But then, there are a lot of hard-to-believe things in this movie. For instance, since Harry and Archie, who were sentenced to thirty years, have served their full term (which in itself strains one's credulity), what are they doing with a parole officer? Why is Harry, who's been placed in a retirement home, forbidden to have a sexual relationship? And why would any parole officer, even a callow twenty-eight-year-old like Richie (Dana Carvey), involve himself in a hopeless, madcap stunt like the one that ends this film? In a certain sort of way-out farce, needless to say, the lack of logic and credible motivation would be part of the joke; but this is not that sort of film.

What's most disturbing about *Tough Guys* is that when the guys get sick of the straight life and recidivate, we are expected to stand up and cheer for them—which is exactly what Harry's retirement home friends do when they hear on the television news about the guys' return to crime. ("Give 'em hell, Harry!" his lady friend, played by the ever-lovely Alexis Smith, screams at the TV.) Crime, we are meant to recognize, is what Harry and Archie do best; it is what makes them feel important; it is their *raison d'être*. For Harry to sit around a retirement home, and Archie to try to hold down a job washing dishes, is undignified; crime makes them feel young and tough and most of all *important*, and is therefore okay. The movie's moral logic is pure 1980s Hollywood: it honors its heroes for striving, not after truth or beauty or goodness, but after notoriety—and for being willing to do almost anything to attain it.

To say all this is not to deny that *Tough Guys* is intermittently very amusing, even (at least in its opening sequences) rather charming. Nor is it to overlook the fine supporting performances by Charles Durning as an aging cop, Eli Wallach as an aging hit man, and Miss Smith as an aging showgirl. But the fact is that without the talents of Lancaster and Douglas—and, equally important, without our affectionate memories of the two actors' past performances, which cause us to feel an instant empathy for Harry and Archie that the script does little to stimulate—this film would be a feeble offering indeed. □

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SWAN SONG FOR HONG KONG

by Richard Brookhiser

Britain's 99-year lease to Hong Kong expires in 1997, at which time the Crown Colony will become part of Communist China. I can now face the prospect with equanimity—for I have a tailor, Ascot Chang of the Peninsula Hotel who, if he finds it prudent to move to Singapore or Taipei or Los Angeles, can carry along my measurements and continue to send me Egyptian cotton shirts.

There are those who deny that any moving will be necessary—most persuasively, the British who are giving Hong Kong up. There was a moment, post-Falklands, when Mrs. Thatcher sounded as if she would defend the Crown Colony, with Gurkhas and captured Exocet missiles if necessary. But realism soon set in. Britain can still have its-way with a fourth-rate power, but not with a peer of the second rank. So London and Peking began to talk. The result, two years ago, was *A Draft Agreement . . . on the Future of Hong Kong*—on paper, an impressive agreement indeed.

"Taking account of the history of Hong Kong and its realities," the Chinese pledge to run it as a Special Administrative Region (SAR), maintaining both the present economic system and "the lifestyle." There follows a long list of rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, travel, strike, demonstration, and religious belief. The SAR will keep its gold and stock markets, its status as a free port, and its own currency (minus the Queen's face); Peking will not levy taxes. The Brit civil servants who have run the place with such a light hand may stay on; so can British judges.

There are little shops on Stanley Street on Hong Kong Island which sell ten-million-dollar bills—payable to the Bank of Hell. Why should the *Draft Agreement* be any more valuable?

The reason most commonly cited for continued Chinese forbearance is the economic value of Hong Kong. Hong Kong is China's outlet to world trade—a First World city on the edge of a vast Third World hinterland. It was not always so; before the Communist takeover, Hong Kong was a sleepy place, deep in the shade of more bustling Chinese cities. But when they shut down, it alone remained open. It conducts a vast amount of China's business; more important, it is the handiest source of people who *can* conduct business. For China to de-capitalize it—to change its unsocialist "lifestyle"—would be an act of self-amputation.

There is a second, political reason. What the Mainland most wants, in this view, is not Hong Kong, but Taiwan. In order to have any chance of regaining Taiwan down the road, Peking must behave well in Hong Kong first. The precedent is supposed to be Macao. During the Cultural Revolution of the mid-sixties, the decrepit Portuguese colony across the estuary of the Pearl River fell under the effective control of Red Guard mobs. Peking held Macao in its palm; it had only to close its fingers. But the Communists, with their eyes on Hong Kong, held off. They worked out an arrangement whereby the colony became "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration." And so, ten years later, when all the rest of Portugal's 400-year-old empire was put on the block, only Auden's "weed of Catholic Europe," with its crumbling cathedrals and hectic casinos, remained under the Portuguese flag. What the Chinese did there—or did not do—after 1966, the argument runs, they will do again, playing for bigger stakes, in Hong Kong after 1997.

Why then am I so sure that Hong Kong is dead meat? I foresee two likely ways in which Hong Kong could die, one slow and one fast.

Hong Kong will die slowly because the Communists, with the best will in the world, will not know how to run it. It may be, as Tom Bethell and all the rest of my friends recently returned from the World Media Association's trip to Peking assure me, that things have truly changed there, and that the Chinese government sees that its best interests lie in the direction of freedom. The benefits to China will be enormous, for when a totalitarian society relaxes any controls to any extent, the concrete sprouts with grass. But for a place like Hong Kong, the slightest imposition of controls is a step backwards. Hong Kong now is probably the most libertarian place on earth. A recent governor general, with the wonderful name of Cowperthwaite, refused even to collect population statistics, on the grounds that such data provided statists and other meddlers the figures with which to flesh out their plans, and he was not going to be a party to *that*. It is only an accident that the British have been able to run a free market economy in Hong Kong; they certainly can't do it at home. Why should the Chinese be any better?

If the Chinese show less than the best will in the world, Hong Kong dies quickly. I am not referring to everyone's favorite hypothetical—a Maoist reaction following the death of Deng Xiaoping. The scenario I have in mind is much more specific. Hong Kong itself will provoke a reaction when members of the Chinese Communist Party see that other members, those who are in charge of Hong Kong affairs, are becoming billionaires—which, through rake-offs, pay-offs, and

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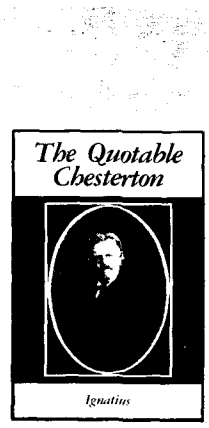
Richard Brookhiser, managing editor of National Review, *is the author of* The Outside Story *(Doubleday).*



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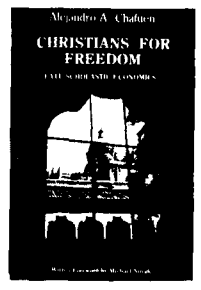

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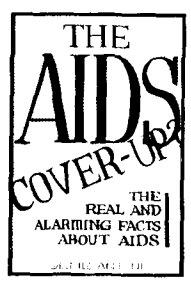

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plain old seein' their opportunities and takin' 'em, they surely will. In itself, this corruption will represent only a small tax on doing business in the Special Administrative Region. But it will make for some very fortunate Mainlanders. Those who are not so fortunate will see that the system leaves them out; from which they will conclude that it is wrong. Envy masked as puritanism will demand change, and Hong Kong will be forced to muddle along at China's pace—much more rapidly, to be sure, than China ten years ago, but hardly the hive of Queen's Road Central today.

Others seem to share this analysis. John Paul II declared this July a month for the entire Roman Catholic Church to pray for the future of the diocese of Hong Kong. The papers were filled with ecclesiastical greetings, about as jolly as telegrams to the Alamo. "We are not at all happy," wrote one Indian bishop, "to hear that Hong Kong will come under the Chinese in 1997. . . . Well, we can't do anything in this matter, except to pray for the grace of God." "May the Lord grant you wisdom and courage," wrote another Indian cleric, "to go ahead and lead your people as Moses once led his people out of the desert." The cheeriest note of all was struck by the cardinal archbishop of Toronto. "It is very encouraging to hear from you that guarantees are promised for the religious freedom of the people of Hong Kong. It is necessary for me to point out that similar guarantees exist in some constitutions under Communist regimes, which are not respected."

On a more mundane level, in 1985 for the first time in decades more capital flowed out of Hong Kong than flowed in. For years, Hong Kong was the place overseas Chinese sent their money, a current more than balancing the investments Hong Kong businessmen made abroad. The calculations, it seems, are changing. Hong Kong residents themselves—those who are able to do so—are taking off several years to live long enough in places like Canada so as to be able to claim residence when the crunch comes. The Hong Kong government points out that they are not remaining abroad, merely doing the necessary time before coming back. The glass, in other words, is half full. For now.

Unlike many conservatives, particularly those of the Church of the Free Market, I am not a rabid Hongkongophile. Anyone who thinks Americans are crass or materialistic should go there. They make us look like Carmelite nuns. The ranks of new buildings, all of them hideous; the thousands of boutiques in the dozens of shopping malls, all, except for the odd Italian or Japanese store, filled with wares that are utterly without style; the crowds at sales that are like rush-hour on a Grand Central subway platform, or a feeding frenzy of sharks; the incessant, relentless getting and spending—finally gets you down. The last time I was there, by some unimaginable failure, even the Chinese food was bad. But the freedom to be our potty little selves certainly includes the freedom to do all this; just as it includes the freedom to order custom-made shirts, which, *sub specie eternitatis*, is not so different; as it includes the freedom to think, pray, raise a family. For almost forty years, Hong Kong, without quite intending to, has offered these freedoms to millions of people; for which it deserves our respect, and the hope, forlorn as the Indian bishop's, that it may continue to do so. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

RICK'S CAFE AMERICAIN

by William McGurn

Brussels

In a continent where a fine Pouilly Fumé might grace even a newspaperman's dinner table, complaints about deprivations here are not likely to fall on sympathetic ears at home. Yet even the good life has its limits. After picking through endless selections of *foie gras, moules vin blanc,* and *escargots à la bourguignonne*, the Yankee palate begins to crave an honest bowl of chili. In this the capital of the European Community there exist a number of saloons ministering to just this market, among them Montana Mike's, the Rainbow, and the now-defunct Cadillac. Yet the only one to have risen above the blue-jeans-and-sweatshirt crowd is Rick's Café Américain, named for the famous watering hole in the film *Casablanca*.

Unlike Humphrey Bogart's legendary establishment, however, this Rick's is neither named for Rick (the owner is Jack) nor a haven for those dispossessed and disenfranchised by the political tides of our unpleasant century. Quite the contrary, in fact. About half-way down the fashionable tree-lined Avenue Louise, Rick's was evidently once home to a Belgian man of some means. The layout roughly resembles a rectangle divided into three parts, with the bar awkwardly placed

smack in the middle, its location dictated by a large mirror and plaster frieze on the wall behind it. It is flanked by two dining sections. That closest to Avenue Louise is the finer of the two, complete with a splendid old fireplace; the other, closer to the kitchen and for the less important guests, is laid out *à l'Européen*, that is, with equal disregard for privacy and comfort.

For the benefit of those patrons for whom the *Casablanca* metaphor is not immediately obvious, the proprietor has covered the walls with innumerable black-and-white stills from the 1942 film: Bogart outside Rick's; Bogart with Peter Lorre; Bogart with Bergman . . . you get the picture. The till is a gold-encrusted job from the National Cash Register Co., which instead of the furtive swooshes of the modern electronic models gives off a robust clang each time a sale is rung up. There are, alas, no Claude Raineses. But Rick's proximity to EC headquarters guarantees a generous quota of Vichyites.

More than a year ago this correspondent took to these columns to describe a public house, Brady's, in the nation most renowned for such institutions; the account was based on a year's intimacy gained during the correspondent's first sojourn abroad.[1] Brady's was a local tavern whose roof generously sheltered a group of homesick American students during the length of their program. Rick's, by contrast, is an expatriate bar. Partly it is because Yankee expats are nearly the only ones in this welfare continent whose after-tax incomes allow enough for one of Rick's eight-dollar cheeseburgers or six-dollar shots of Jack Daniel's. Mostly, however, Rick's is an expatriate bar by choice.

As distinguished from a saloon patronized by foreigners (e.g., Brady's), the expatriate bar has some definite characteristics of its own. High on this list, of course, is the clientele. Today shoals of tourists cross the Atlantic to search places like Harry's New York in Venice, Café Aux Deux Magots in Paris, or any of the myriad other watering holes where Ernest Hemingway ever took a drink. A visit to such bars

William McGurn is deputy managing editor of the Brussels-based Wall Street Journal/Europe.

[1] "Brady's of Maynooth," *TAS*, August 1985.

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has now become as much a part of the tourist experience as a gondola ride or a trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower.

An expatriate bar is different. It is not so much a part of the local landscape as an escape from it. It is a place where a Brooklyn accountant may order in his mother tongue without embarrassment. It is a place where men and women born on the plains of Iowa and reared on simple, God-fearing fare may demand a hamburger and be presented with a reasonable facsimile. In short, it is a place where the locals are foreign and the foreigners are at home.

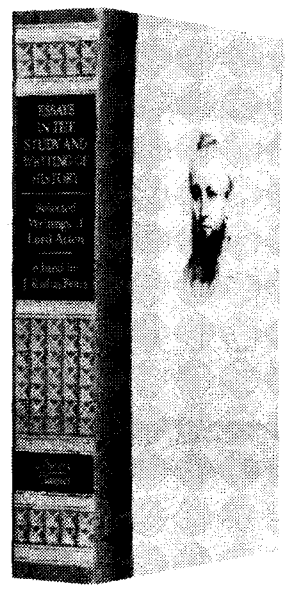
For this same reason the expatriate saloon—despite management's tireless campaign to present itself to the host country as a faithful, law-abiding establishment—inevitably has the whiff of the subversive about it. At the extreme, it may serve men and women actively plotting against the local government. At the very least, it provides expatriates with a sanctuary where they may regale one another with jokes at the expense of the natives, in the manner of a British colonial governor entertaining a group of his fellow countrymen. At Rick's these conversations express varying degrees of astonishment at how slow/incompetent/thick the Belgians are. All in all, not unlike discussing the new neighbors in the privacy of the family drawing room.

As for the crowd that frequents Rick's, again it is somewhat removed from the denizens of Humphrey Bogart's gin joint. ITT's nearby European headquarters ensures a healthy contingent of button-down types, especially during Happy Hour. Students, newspapermen, minor diplomats, assorted businessmen, and the odd down-and-out poet lend it a slightly exotic air. This is not to qualify Rick's as an intellectual bar; that honor is given to only a few cafes, and a good rule of thumb is that these are not places where the American Express card is accepted and one can order a Long Island Iced Tea. No, what Rick's offers is not intellectual stimulation but a manufactured sleaze that strikes just the right expatriate pitch of "roughing it," like the thin crust on the neck of a ketchup bottle—homelike but not really unhealthy.

Of course Rick's is not without its down side. For one thing the basement is a Friday/Saturday-night disco, a flagrant pick-up joint where lecherous old execs compete with lithe young students for the few available women ("the only thing older than the meat are the women," says one expatriate publisher). Another complaint, raised in Yankee circles, revolves around the unseemly number of Brits who favor Rick's over their own expatriate establishments, which are located nearer the EC. Then, too, one hears grumblings about the way corners have been cut on the Sunday brunch: smaller pancakes, no cornbread, and coffee that goes for $1.35 a cup—without refills.

Even our own homes have their faults, however—the squeaky faucet in the bathroom, that hideous wallpaper in the hallway—which we overlook simply because it is home. In time, as our powers of memory are overwhelmed by sentiment, these very faults tend to acquire the most nostalgic hues. It is no different with Rick's. Its shortcomings are responsible for whatever small measure of charm it may hold.

In the end, though, Rick's attracts the expatriate because that is who it is intended to attract. In a world increasingly given over to extending privileges solely by merit or financial condition, the satisfaction of being welcome merely because of an accident of birth is hard to come by. The arbitrariness of it all is what is most appealing. "Everybody comes to Rick's," says Claude Raines near the beginning of *Casablanca*. Meaning, not everybody does. Which is precisely what makes it so comforting. □



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BOOK REVIEWS

AGAINST ALL HOPE: THE PRISON MEMOIRS OF ARMANDO VALLADARES

Armando Valladares/Alfred A. Knopf/$18.95

Vladimir Bukovsky

A few years ago in Caracas, Venezuela, as part of our activities with Resistance International, I attended a series of hearings with Armando Valladares on political repression in Nicaragua. After three days of testimony about persecution of several groups—including lawyers, trade-unionists, human rights activists, Jews—we became particularly concerned with the plight of the Miskito Indians. It seemed clear to us that the Sandinista policy toward them amounted to nothing less than genocide.

Although the local press paid some attention to the hearings, the world media ignored them, focusing instead on a conference of Latin American Ministers of Finance a few blocks away. Fernando Arrabal, the Spanish playwright, suggested that we hold a small peaceful demonstration at the financial conference in hopes of attracting the media's attention, if only briefly, to the Indians' plight.

A group of us "borrowed" a sheet from our hotel, scribbled a slogan on it, and after smuggling it into the conference under someone's clothes, unfurled it in front of the ministers and the television cameras as Adriana Guillen, a spokesman for the Miskitos, presented their case.

The event lasted no longer than a minute, but the local police and security guards, apparently insulted by our little publicity stunt, surrounded us when we tried to leave the building. In much confusion we were taken from the conference room to some sort of guardhouse, where the turmoil and hostility escalated as a series of police officials arrived, each one of higher rank than the last.

Finally the door swung open and the chief of police himself entered the room. Shifting a fiery gaze from prisoner to prisoner, he spoke rapidly and threateningly in Spanish. Suddenly I heard Valladares's voice resounding in complete silence.

"I am Armando Valladares. I have spent twenty-two years in Castro's jails. Would you arrest me?"

Valladares spoke quietly, but there was so much dignity and force in his voice, so much implacable will in his words, that the chief merely looked at him sheepishly, and I knew then that the incident was over.

Valladares's twenty-two years of torment and triumph are now condensed for us in these 380 pages. *Against All Hope* is a rather dispassionate account. Indeed, at first the reader might be surprised by the aloofness with which Valladares describes his ordeal. Detail takes precedence over emotion. But eventually it comes to mind that this is not a book in any usual sense; it is rather a testimony, an indictment, a history of the Cuban "revolution" viewed from its dungeons. (And how is a socialist revolution seen more clearly than from its "sewage system"?)

Understood this way, the tone of *Against All Hope* is not at all surprising. To endure the regular beatings, the hunger, the humiliation and psychological "experimentation" to which a revolution subjects its unrepentant enemies, you must learn to be estranged, to watch yourself from a distance. How then do you describe the regular beatings with truncheons, chains, and bayonets; beatings so brutal that your friends are often left bleeding, mutilated, or murdered? How to describe being locked in solitary for a year, naked and hungry, awakened each morning with a bucketful of human excrement thrown from above? Since no bath was allowed and no water provided, a crust of filth and fungus would cover your body until after many months "this crust could be peeled off like a scab or like the rind of a fruit."

This was the kind of treatment meted out routinely to Valladares and his colleagues. But it was something they got used to. At La Cabaña, executions were performed by young conscripts for five pesos and three days leave apiece. The leader of the executioners was an American, Herman F. Marks, who "had a dog he took with him to the executions so the dog could lap up the dead men's blood." (Mr. Marks, by the way, now reportedly lives in the United States. Why hasn't the Justice Department gone after him?) At Bonita prison, there were the "drawer cells" and "biological experiments," the latter overseen by Soviet, Czech, and East German "doctors." I am much more familiar with such experiments than with the outright terror of the newly victorious revolution:

> They did not try to kill us quickly; that would have been too generous a gesture to have hoped for from those sadists. Their object was to force us, by means of terror and torture, into the Political Rehabilitation Program. To do that, they were slowly and inexorably destroying us. They would take us to the very brink of death and keep us there, without letting us cross it.

Indeed, under the encouraging influence of the Soviet Union (or perhaps due to Cuba's smaller size), the "revolutionary process" in Cuba covered in twenty-seven years what the Soviet Union has achieved in seventy. Within a single generation Cuba advanced from "revolutionary justice" to "socialist legality," from the "liquidation of class enemies" to "political rehabilitation." The result is truly paradoxical: the same people who would have been happily shot at the revolution's beginning were not allowed to die a few years later, even if they went on a hunger strike.

The confusion created by the hasty pace of Cuban history is duly reflected in the composition of the prison population; different stages of "class struggle" and purges, as well as different periods of popular resistance, almost coincided. It is as if in Soviet prisons today one could come across White Army officers, old revolutionaries, Trotskyists, and peasant guerrillas serving alongside modern-day dissidents and Jews seeking emigration to Israel. A large number of Castro's prisoners are his former comrades-in-arms who "deviated" from his course at one or another turning point, while their cell-mates could be anybody from former Batista pilots to members of the current intellectual opposition. But perhaps this is as it should be in a country where the supreme leader combines in himself Lenin and Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev. What might be interesting for a historian, however, is usually quite painful for contemporaries. Valladares and his friends had to endure the same set of sufferings as three generations of Russians. →

Vladimir Bukovsky left the Soviet Union in 1976 after twelve years in Soviet prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric "hospitals." He is the author of To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter.

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For all its dispassionate detail, *Against All Hope* is not just a catalogue of horrors and tortures. It is, above all, a powerful testimony to the strength of the human spirit. At the time of his arrest in 1960, Valladares was a 23-year-old clerk at a postal savings bank in Havana. He was not politically involved, but he had "frequently spoken out against Communism as a political system because it went against my religious beliefs and some of my more idealistic notions of the world." "And I was very naive," he writes. "It never occurred to me that because I expressed my opinions, because I spoke out against Marxism, they would drag me off to jail. Moreover, the government still hadn't declared itself Marxist. Castro would do that only some months later."

This naivete, we should add, was shared at the time by the most sophisticated political observers. But while Castro and his admirers were vehemently denying any connection between the new Cuban regime and Communist ideology, thousands had already been thrown into jails for criticizing Marxism. Even many years later, numerous sympathizers and apologists for Fidel would still blame American "overreaction" for "pushing him into Soviet hands"—a myth which can hardly be explained by a simple naiveté.

The real turning point in Armando's spiritual development came in La Cabaña, during the nightly executions:

> When I heard the discharges of the rifles, I would be seized with horror, and I embraced Christ in desperation. . . . He served to give my life, and my death if it came to that, ethical meaning. Both my life and my death would be dignified by my belief in Him. It was at that moment, I am sure, and not before, that Christianity became, more than a religious faith, a way of life for me. Because of my situation, it seemed my life would necessarily be a life of resistance, but I would be sustained in it by a soul filled with love and hope. Those cries of the executed patriots—"Long live Christ the King! Down with Communism!"—had awakened me to a new life as they echoed through the two-hundred-year-old moats of the fortress.

Valladares became one of the *plantados*, the diehards who would not join the Rehabilitation Program under any circumstances. That, of course, was a direct challenge to the regime and therefore meant even more torture, beatings, degradation, and murder. Some were forced to pull weeds with their teeth and to eat dirt, others were beaten to death or killed with bayonets, or submerged in ditches filled with human excrement. "But in step with the insane fury of the soldiers, a deep consciousness was growing inside us, an inflexible determination to resist, not to give in. We grew harder and harder, convinced that we were a symbol of resistance for the entire country."

Indeed they were. In a time of ultimate crisis a nation needs a symbol to survive. A sense of enormous responsibility for your nation becomes much stronger than a craving for your personal life. Those who have never lived through such an experience may see the struggle as senseless fanaticism, as a death wish, or as simple masochism. What is the point of token resistance by a couple of hundred when millions have already accepted their fate? What is the point in being starved and beaten just for the refusal to be dressed in a blue uniform instead of a green? But dictators and conquerors do see the point. As long as there is a symbol, the nation is not conquered. A shot in the back is not a solution, for symbols are immortal.

Even the hardest of tests, like the imprisonment of his father, failed to break Armando's will. Confined to a wheelchair, asthmatic and starving, denied medical treatment unless he accepted political rehabilitation, Valladares suddenly discovered a new weapon: poetry. Smuggled out of prison on tiny scraps of paper, his words continued the struggle, even though he himself could no longer

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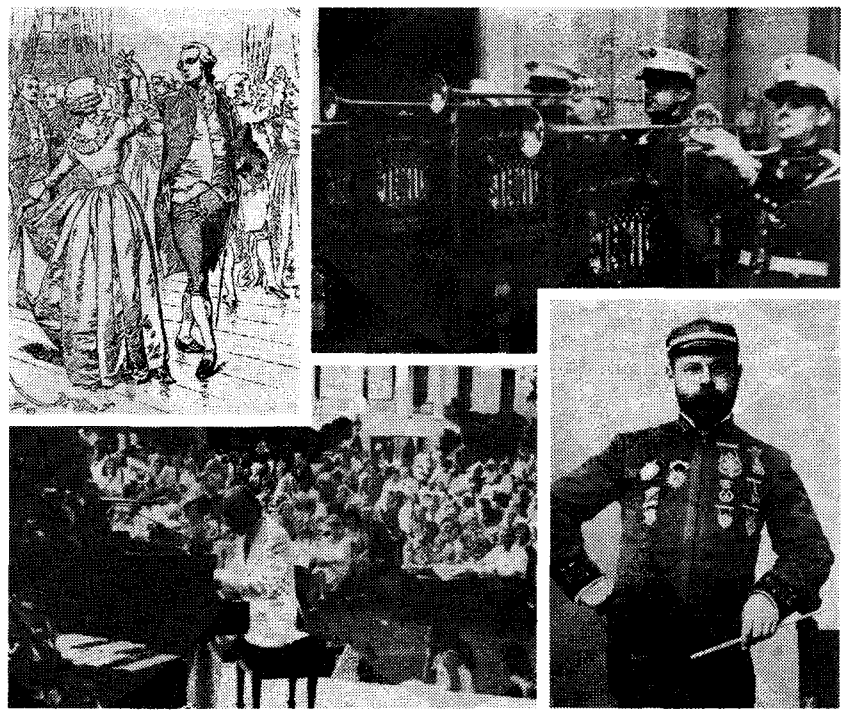

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walk. And no matter how hard his captors tried to isolate him, to cut off his lifeline, the scraps of paper invariably arrived in Miami, where his wife Martha lived. His first collection of poetry, *From My Wheelchair*, increased the public pressure from abroad that finally forced Castro to release him.

No hatred or bitterness disturbs his dispassionate account because those who are not broken only pity their tormentors. Yet *Against All Hope* is an indictment nevertheless. It is an indictment of the world's complicity and indifference, an indictment of the Western sympathizers with the "charismatic revolutionary leader" Fidel Castro, who silenced the screams of the tortured. Thanks to them, the names of La Cabaña and Boniato, Isla de Piños and Combinado del Este are not known to the world, as Auschwitz and Bitburg are. It is an indictment also of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which answered with silence all the appeals addressed to them by the Cuban political prisoners. It is an indictment of Monsignor Cesar Zacchi, the Vatican's ambassador to Cuba, and of Pierr Schori, secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic party, of all the advocates of "quiet diplomacy" and the architects of the silence that surrounds the crimes of Communism—in the words of Valladares, the "silence of complicity." □

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES:
HOPES BETRAYED, 1883-1920
Robert Skidelsky/Viking/$24.95

Colin Welch

Sir Roy Harrod's *Life* of Keynes was published in 1951. It omitted all reference to Keynes's homosexuality. Why was that? In his fascinating introduction to his own fascinating life of Keynes, Robert Skidelsky adduces a number of reasons, credible but not to him or to anyone else wholly satisfying or convincing. A distinguished Keynesian economist himself, Harrod admired, even venerated his friend Keynes. But this was not enough to endear or even render tolerable to him his hero's active homosexuality, his loose ethics, derived from the epicurean Cambridge philosopher G. E. Moore, or the ambiguous Cambridge secret society, the Apostles, and the epicene Bloomsbury set, of both of which Keynes was a committed aficionado. Faced with the disagreeable, Harrod hastened past, eyes averted, nose held. His Keynes is accordingly a Tadzio-less Aschenbach, a Portnoy with no complaint.

Much of Keynes's individuality had to be suppressed, and this, according to Keynes himself, for long periods of his life the most important part. Keynes said, though Harrod does not quote him, that of his prime objects in life before 1914, when he was already over 30 and a prize fellow of King's (an honor he would characteristically have liked to celebrate by raping an undergraduate [male] in the dons' combination room, "just to make them see things a little more in their true light"—though many King's dons can have needed no such instruction), love (homosexual) came a long way first. Homosexuality was not for him, as it was for Harrod, an unfortunate but irrelevant aberration, but rather a vital part of "the good life" as he saw it. Nor was it in any way sublimated or repressed. The statistics of sexual encounters he kept in his diary made James Strachey "gasp," his conversation struck Lytton Strachey as "inordinately filthy." To disgust Lytton Strachey, high priest of "the higher sodomy" (their own phrase), was no mean feat.

Harrod did not suppress the influence on Keynes of Moore, in whose philosophy Beatrice Webb saw nothing "except a metaphysical justification for doing what you like and what other people disapprove of." But he diminishes it, in Mr. Skidelsky's view, to "yet another of those adolescent stages through which his hero passed on the road to maturity." Yet at the age of 55, on the eve of World War II, Keynes, while gently criticizing certain aspects of the Moorite creed, reaffirmed that he found it "nearer the truth than any other that I know . . . nothing to be ashamed of," still "my religion under the surface . . . I remain and always will remain an immoralist." A long, long adolescence, this!

As for the Apostles' Society, Harrod implied that it had ceased to exist (it still meets thirty-five years later) and announced that it was "time to desist from prying into the affairs of that august body." An "august body," indeed, in which Keynes himself inspected "beauties" (male) for potential membership and which nourished the spies Burgess and Blunt as well as other scaly figures. Time perhaps to *start* prying rather than to desist!

Even the normally shrewd Mr. Skidelsky takes a relaxed view of the Apostles: "It was widely if implausibly suggested that the Society had fostered, or by its secrecy in some way facilitated, [the spies'] treacherous activities." This suggestion seems to me in no way implausible. The Society's prevailing ethos was defiantly expressed by Keynes himself: "We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were . . . in the strict sense of the term, immoralists. The consequences of being found out had . . . to be considered, for what they were worth. But we recognized no moral obligation on us, no inner sanction, to conform or to obey. Before heaven [!] we claimed to be our own judge in our own case." It is a dull mind indeed which cannot see in these arrogant and unedifying sentiments every sort of treason, treachery, and disloyalty sanctioned, as also in E. M. Forster's famous Bloomsburian *mot*: "If I had to choose between betraying my country or betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country." As if one's country did not contain many friends!

With a certain sly exultation, unless I misjudge him, Mr. Skidelsky finds that "the most striking thing about the Apostles is their quintessential Britishness," a remark he justifies by conventional references to the exclusiveness of English upper-class society and its distaste for commerce and industry, to the barbarities of English public school education, to the stifling moralism of English family life, and to the English capacity to keep its upper-class males in a state of petrified adolescence. If there is or was, as I ruefully concede, some truth in all this, it serves not to excuse the Apostles but to spread the guilt far wider, through a whole decadent intelligentsia, clerisy, and ruling class.

Mr. Skidelsky sympathizes with other difficulties facing Harrod—the problem, for instance, of "the widow and the friends," as Virginia Woolf called it. Keynes's actual widow, the delightful ballerina Lydia Lopokova, gave little trouble. But there were other relations, notably Keynes's brother Geoffrey, who understandably wanted to destroy all Keynes's letters to Lytton Strachey. Harrod, though he did not use them, honorably prevented this epistolary vandalism. Then there were Keynes's Bloomsbury friends and fellow economists, many in command of sources, all to be consulted, all demanding the suppression of this or that, never the same thing: all had different axes to grind. Harrod was reduced to a *crise de nerfs*; the strain brought him to "the end of his tether."

But Harrod also suppressed much off his own bat—Keynes's application, for instance, to be a conscientious objector to military service in World War I. This application seems quite superfluous—a bad case of belt *and* braces—since he was at the Treasury in a reserved occupation. But he may have half-intended to resign from the Treasury, rather than go on working for "a Government I despise for ends I think criminal"—another sentiment omitted

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by Harrod. Other letters are cleaned up by Harrod, including one which lightheartedly expresses Keynes's longing to "swindle the investing public."

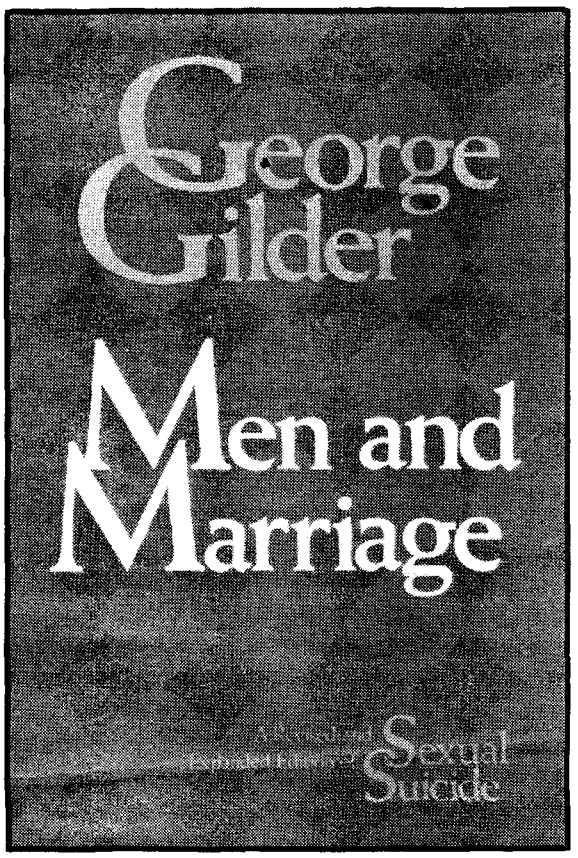
One of Harrod's purposes in cleaning up Keynes's act was to sell Keynes's reflections on "demand management" and permanent boom, highly salutary as Harrod thought them, to the all-important Americans. These innocents were supposed then to take as dim a view of homosexuality and draft-dodging as Keynes normally took of Americans, whom he treated with an arrogant rudeness which is still embarrassing. With Melchior, his German opposite number at the Paris peace talks in 1919, Keynes fell "in a sort of way . . . in love." I can think of no American who inspired even such modified raptures.

Another justification for Harrod's reticence lies in the tormenting dilemma: Are the private life, personal opinions, whims, and antics of a great "scientist" relevant to any account or evaluation of his public works, scientific hypotheses, and discoveries? Keynesian economists, disciples, and groupies have naturally denied that they are and have manfully struggled to insulate "life" from "thought." Prof. Maurice Peston has written: "It is obvious philosophical nonsense to suggest that there is a connection" between Keynes's sexuality and his economics; "the logical validity of a theory and its empirical relevance are independent of its progenitor. What help is knowledge of the lives of Newton and Einstein in predicting the movement of the planets?"

The life-thought connection is perfectly apparent to Mr. Skidelsky, himself no enemy to "funny-money" theories: indeed, he thinks Keynesian economics "robust" enough to survive revelations about Keynes's private life. Well they may survive, but less to my mind because of whatever is robust in them than because of what is slippery, evasive, delusorily beguiling, and calculated to fulfill many wish-dreams. The life-thought connection, long apparent to me and others, must have been in the mind of the great Schumpeter when he wrote in 1952 about Keynes: "He was childless, and his philosophy of life was essentially a short-run philosophy. So he turned resolutely to the only 'parameter of action' that seemed left to him, both as an Englishman and *the sort of Englishman he was* [Mr. Skidelsky's italics]—monetary management." Schumpeter refers elsewhere to Keynes's "childless vision," exemplified in his famous dictum, "In the long run we are all dead"—not a sentiment which would occur readily to a father or grandfather, well aware that after he is dead his offspring will normally be living, and deserve his forethought now.

Economics is not in fact an exact science—least of all did Keynes think it so, with his healthy mistrust of mathematical economics. It is not susceptible to scientific experiment or proof. It has to deal with too many variables, indeed, with the whole of human life seen from a certain angle. In that life millions of wills are free, and the *ceteris paribus* condition, the bane of all economic prediction, endures no longer than a mayfly. Somebody dubbed economics "the science of choice." Professor James Buchanan objected: Where there is genuine choice there can be no science.

Into a field in such flux, economists can reasonably import and apply their own noneconomic value judgments and prejudices, their views of what constitutes a good society: more free or less so, more or less equal, orientated to present opulence or future, more harshly motivated or more lazily content, richer or happier, and so on. This being so, we can reasonably take an interest in what an economist's values really are and how they are connected to his "scientific" activities. Keynes was always hostile to thrift,



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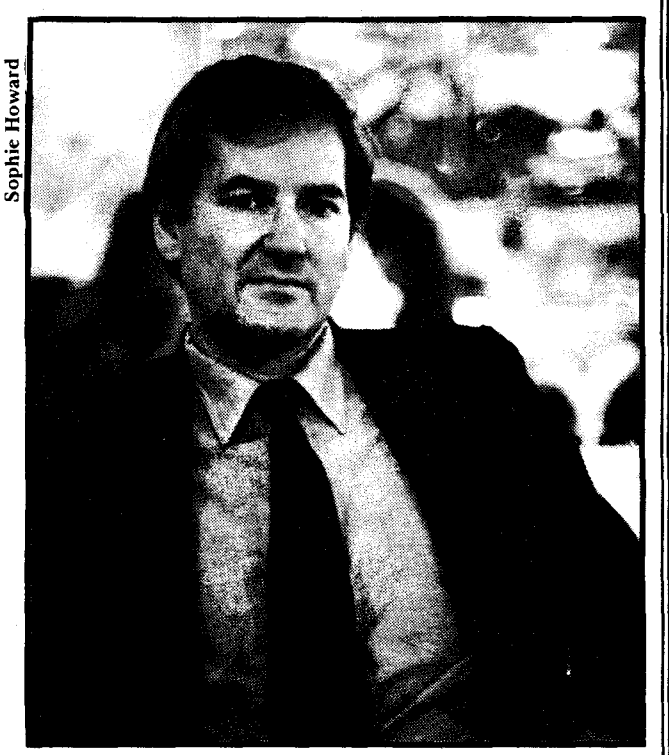
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which he regarded as economically and socially harmful, and savings, exemplifying for him an age-old Puritan fallacy; consumption was for him the source of economic growth; he flirted long with Malthusian population theories about "excessive fecundity," for him the cause of revolutions and other evils. True, false, or neither, are not such views and interests natural to a man of Keynes's values and personal predispositions or, to put it more crudely, as Keynes did, natural to a man who found the Arabs of Tunis "wonderful, very beautiful and the first race of buggers I've ever seen," as if their very existence did not demolish his enraptured misapprehension!

To say that Mr. Skidelsky has corrected many misconceptions about Keynes is perfectly true, but a totally inadequate tribute to his achievement. This is not a nitpicking commentary on other people's errors but an artistic triumph, a virtual resurrection, a living portrait of a remarkable man, seen for the first time as a complete whole and alas, thus seen, revealing himself as in some respects woefully incomplete. But not in all respects.

Mr. Skidelsky repeatedly reminds us of how far above his values Keynes continuously rose. Indeed, says Mr. Skidelsky, "many economists have had higher ethical ideals; none have achieved so much practical good." A bit thick this, in a field once graced by Adam Smith—Shakespeare, say, to Keynes's Shaw or Noel Coward. Yet Keynes's loyalty to free trade, his tireless work to create arrangements and institutions favorable to it, did produce for us thirty years of unequalled prosperity, only now in jeopardy. For this new age of the Antonines he deserves our abiding gratitude.

Wherever four economists were gathered together, it was said, there would be five conflicting opinions, two of them advanced by Mr. Keynes. He was infinitely various, fruitfully self-contradictory, often self-correcting. For whatever poisons or quack remedies he recommended, he usually supplied his own antidotes. Dubbed "the father of inflation," for instance, no one of his generation wrote more eloquently or harshly about it and its dire consequences. It was widely rumored that at the end of his life, he was gravely disturbed by some of the possible consequences of his theories, rightly or wrongly interpreted and applied. Never mind, he is reported to have said, there will be time for me to put all that right. But there wasn't. In the short run, alas, he was dead. Wiser are those who think always of the long run, and bear in mind that it may start tomorrow! □

WASHINGTON BEDTIME STORIES: THE POLITICS OF MONEY AND JOBS

Herbert Stein/The Free Press/$19.95

Melville J. Ulmer

Collections of previously published essays are by definition retreads and justify resurrection between hard covers only to preserve the enduringly worthy—literary gems, classics of humor, philosophical wisdom, and the like. Herbert Stein's *Washington Bedtime Stories*, despite its intriguing title, more closely resembles the scrapbook of a witty and uncommonly skillful economist. As such it is not prone to keep a reader turning pages, nor is its choppy succession of newspaper columns, magazine articles, and addresses likely to prove especially educational. Nevertheless, for those who are fans of this former presidential adviser (under Richard Nixon), the book affords an opportunity to browse nostalgically among these samples of his output; and for others there are a few interesting economic questions raised and answered.

By "Washington bedtime stories" Stein means tales "made up" by his professional colleagues to "amuse or frighten the citizenry," as he puts it in a brief preface. But actually, though there is ample criticism in these pages, there is little if any reference to the publicity-seeking alarm-bell ringers that one might expect from this introductory comment. With just three exceptions—devoted to doomsaying radicals—all forty-four of the essays in the book deal with current economic issues and their proposed solutions—*current*, I should hasten to add, when Stein wrote them. The great majority of the contributions date back to the years 1980 through 1983, with a few of earlier vintage and a very few later. Hence there is that inescapable risk for author and readers; in the dynamic scene of modern politico-economics, public issues and opinions about them obsolesce almost as rapidly as newspaper headlines.

Nevertheless, there is an underlying theme of seminal interest that in some degree holds together all the otherwise disparate and ephemeral contributions. This is the proposition that the practical knowledge of economists is severely limited, so severely, Stein writes, that "on many questions of economic policy there is no bridge between theory and decision. Travel between theory and decision is not a bridge but a flight of fancy. The knowledge of economists is far short of what would be reasonably needed for making a decision."

In perhaps the longest essay in the book, "Bricks Without Straw," Stein provides examples. He quotes one unidentified source—"a leading government economist"—as saying that he was certain that the upcoming budgetary deficit would have a significant effect on business activity, but he didn't know whether it would push it up or down. That kind of modesty wins Stein's approval.

The same essay points to the familiar allegations that the huge federal deficits, rising so sharply since 1982, would "crowd out" private investment, raise interest rates and inflation too, and Stein concludes that we still really do not know. Perhaps he would be forced to agree, at least, that we know the allegations could not possibly have been true since, as Warren Brookes has pointed out, interest rates have plummeted, the inflation rate has fallen, and ten million new jobs have been created even as the federal deficit has risen to a record high of $220 billion.

All of which, of course, does not prove that government debt is a good thing. Stein's well-known position is

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Melville J. Ulmer is professor of economics at the University of Maryland. His most recent contribution to The American Spectator *was a review of Lester Thurow's* The Zero-Sum Solution.

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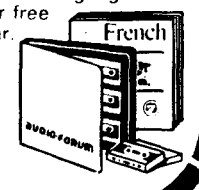

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that the menace of the deficit should be banished as soon as possible by a brisk increase in taxes.

In three of the essays—entitled "Economics at the *New Yorker*," "Baying at Economists," and "Industrial Policy à la Reich"—Stein deals with a group of economists whose knowledge, he feels, falls well below the average. These are the radically inclined economic planners whom, in an abbreviated list, he identifies as Robert Reich, Robert Lekachman, Michael Harrington, and Robert Heilbroner. In summary, what these writers have in common is a vision of capitalism as an already feeble system drawing ever closer to its inevitable demise. They seem to rejoice at this, since from the ashes of our present society they see the ascent of their own glowing vision of central planning come to life, with of course unprecedented progress and equal shares for all. They are also unanimous in urging that reforms begin at once, especially in redistributing income. Concerning Reich's magnum opus of 1983, *The Next American Frontier*, Stein writes:

> This book has three elements: a description of the terrible present state and future prospects of the American economy, a theory of the causes of that dreadful condition, and a prescription for rescuing us. The description of our condition is grossly exaggerated. The theory of the causes of the alleged condition is inadequately supported. The prescription is, with some exceptions, unpersuasive.

Nevertheless, Reich's voice emanated from that citadel of intellectual authority, Harvard. Moreover, its clarion call came like sweet music to the ears of campaigning politicians hungry for a "liberal" theme. It is no surprise, therefore, that weighty endorsements sprouted like weeds in springtime, including those of Mondale, Hart, and affiliated Democratic stalwarts. Stein says that he would have found this "frightening" except when he "thought of politicians what Jimmy Walker thought about girls. He never knew one to be ruined by a book."

Equally brusque is Stein's response to the other members of this school, as in the closing words of his review of Lekachman's *Economics at Bay: Why the Experts Will Never Solve Your Problem*:

> It is symptomatic that the word "freedom" does not appear in the index of Mr. Lekachman's book, except as part of the title of a work by Milton Friedman; I do not think that the word appears in the text at all. Similarly, although there is admiring exposition of Marx's vision, there is no reference to the Soviet Union, the living embodiment of that vision, except as a country to which Richard Nixon sold wheat.

The fragility of economic knowledge once again captures Stein's interest in his essay on "The Deficit-Dollar-Trade Nexus." Here he is especially concerned with economic judgments about foreign trade as popularized in the media. Whether he holds reporters or their professional sources responsible isn't disclosed, but for one who cautions restraint in the expression of opinions, he is forceful about the possible harm done. Contrary to the complaint that American purchasing power has been drained by a predilection for bargain-priced cars, steel, and textiles from abroad, Stein staunchly contends that an excess of imports over exports is a welcome symbol of American prosperity. As he sees it, any possible depressing effect on our business activity or employment can be easily dispelled by a proper monetary policy: specifically, one that would generate "enough demand to absorb all the goods and services produced domestically plus the goods and services imported from abroad." Q.E.D. Or is it?

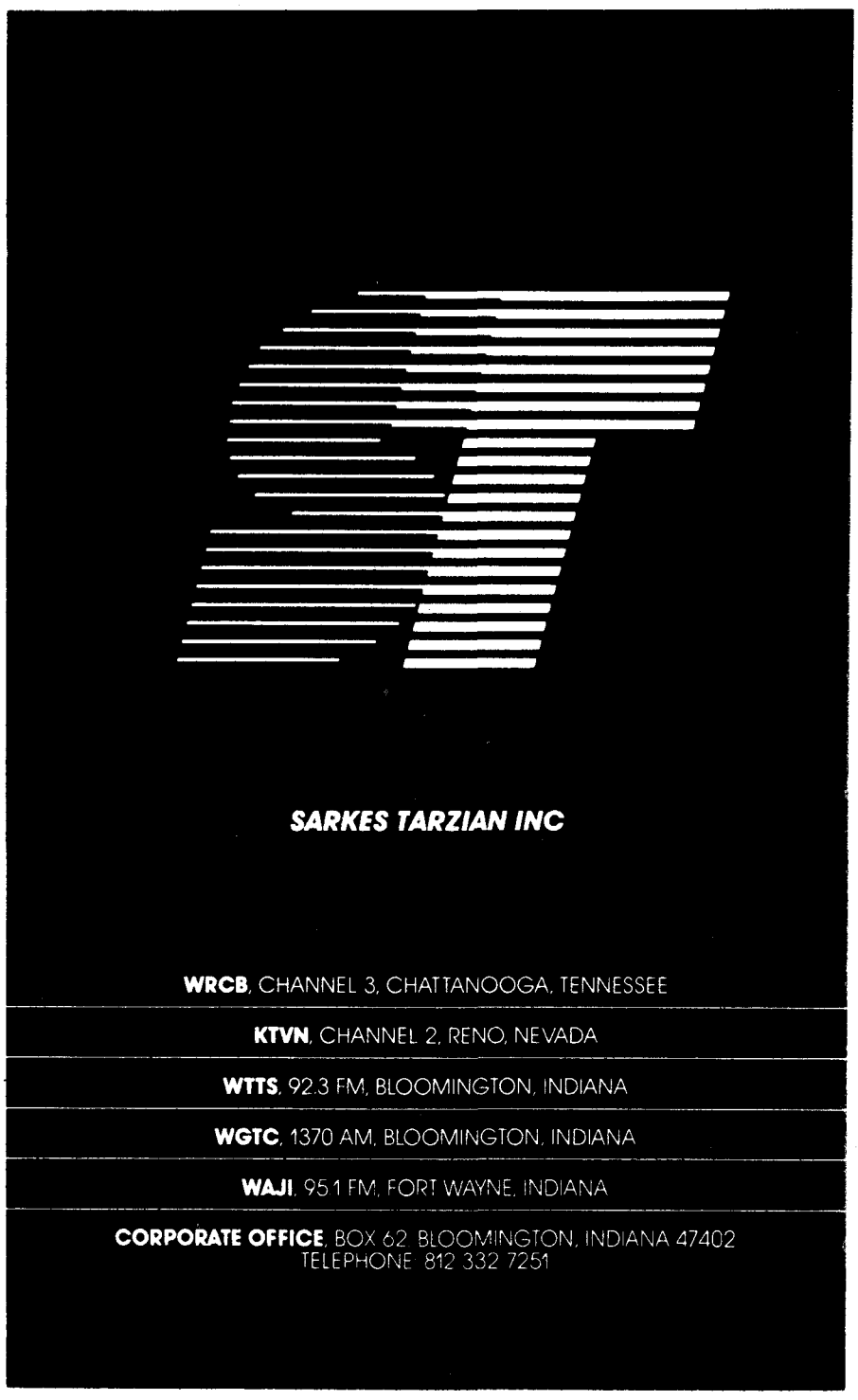
Stein uncovers similar bugaboos in the fearful observations that the United States is becoming a service economy and a debtor nation to boot. So what? he asks, and promptly replies:

> In the first place, there is nothing particularly wrong with being a service economy. If the rest of the world will simply supply us with steel, oil and other hard goods in exchange for reruns of "Dallas" and essays on economics, and if the terms are good, there is nothing wrong with that situation. In the second place, however, we are not becoming a service economy. In 1984, the output of goods was as large a proportion of total output as it had been in any year since 1957. The output of durable goods was a larger proportion of total output than it had been at any time since World War II.

As regards our novel (for modern times) role as a debtor nation, he argues that the location of a nation's assets and the nationality of its creditors are immaterial. What matters is only their magnitude. He concludes: "For the United States there is no disadvantage or danger in that people in the rest of the world find the United States a good place to invest."

As broad generalizations Stein's points are well taken, and would require no qualification at all if free trade prevailed as fully in practice as it does in the literature of professional economists. For there is no doubt, as Ricardo was the first to prove, that unfettered trade would optimize allocation of the world's resources and maximize the supply of goods and services for all. But under pressure from their own mishandling of domestic affairs and embarrassing unemployment at home, our treasured allies and major trading partners have not behaved like the best of friends. They have effectively blocked imports of leading American products and subsidized their own exports to our lush markets. So have the recipients of our financial aid and political comfort like South Korea. The results have not in every instance been happy, as the inhabitants of Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, West Virginia, and elsewhere can testify. In short, severe disruptions in the allocation of American resources have idled people and machines, and not all of them are justified by the valid shifts in comparative advantage that Ricardo, and now Stein, had in mind. Yet if the latter's position is, even in part, another bedtime story, adding a dose of protective retaliation would indeed produce a truly grim fairy tale. The need is for a solution of another kind.

If Stein can be held to display a bias in these essays, it would be the understandable one of favoring the more technical members of his craft, commonly called the mainstream. They populate most of the university economics departments today and embrace nearly all the actual or potential Nobel prize winners. Evidence of Stein's protective instincts, beyond the call of duty as it were, are rare but significant. The first has to do with the wave of social engineering that began with the New Deal and culminated in the ridiculous pretenses for "fine-tuning" fiscal policy, leading to a roller coaster of deepening unemployment and flaring inflation and ending only with the arrival of Ronald Reagan. One might imagine that if professional responsibility were assigned for whatever faults are acknowledged in this pre-Reagan span of economic history, it would lie with FDR's famed "Brain Trust" and, more definitively, with the highly visible mainstream economists, like Walter Heller and Ar-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thur Okun, who promoted and applied "Keynesian" theory in a vainglorious effort to make business cycles obsolete. But no. To my utter astonishment, Stein passes the cup of hemlock to John Kenneth Galbraith, of whom he writes: "He promoted, and in some cases originated, many of the ideas which guided that wave [of social engineering] until recently: that fiscal policy should be used to achieve economic stability and high employment."

Now, despite his public eminence, Galbraith has much to answer for in his writing, most grievously his dangerously naive view of the Soviet Union. But he had virtually no influence on policy in the 1930s; during World War II he assisted Leon Henderson in managing price controls; in the 1950s he was out completely; in the 1960s John Kennedy shipped him off to India; and in the councils of government he has not been heard from since. The people who were responsible are the famous names (rarely, if ever, mentioned in Stein's book) who populated the President's successive Councils of Economic Advisers and told the greatest bedtime stories in modern history.

A second evidence of Stein's protective proclivities appears in his essays, "Some Supply-Side Propositions" and "What Happened to the Supply Side?" As most readers will recognize, supply-side economics arose with the Reagan Administration as a response to the "liberal" activist policies that had been increasingly dominant since the 1950s. The new doctrine had two elements. First, under certain circumstances, a reduction in taxes would actually increase total revenue collections. Second, on a broader canvas, the new doctrine questioned the identity of the prime source of economic welfare—not the *only* but the *prime* source. For this role, it would replace government and its capacity for redistributing income and subsidizing favored activities, with private enterprise and its capacity for producing the goods and services people want.

Stein makes no mention of the second element in supply-side doctrine (with which he probably agrees), but bluntly challenges its first, which he interprets as a blatant contradiction of mainstream wisdom. His zeal leads him to overlook three little words in his oversimplified version of the supply-side doctrine, which he states as follows: "A tax reduction, not accompanied by a reduction of government expenditures, will raise the total revenue, and will do so by operating on the supply side of the economy." On that basis Stein reasonably asks, wouldn't that feel so good that we'd want to do it again and again endlessly? Why, to be utterly absurd, have any taxes at all?

The three little words omitted from the supply-side dictum are "under certain circumstances." Quite accurately, Paul Craig Roberts, Bruce Bartlett, Arthur Laffer, and others judged that the circumstances were especially propitious for a tax cut at the end of the 1970s. Partly because of bracket creep, the advance in taxes in the preceding ten years had been unprecedented, strangling business investment, individual enterprise, risk-taking, and productive effort in general; encouraging tax shelters, other forms of tax avoidance, and the illegal activities of the underground economy; reducing the cost of leisure to make goofing off a national pastime. A brisk reduction in the tax burden was intended to reverse all these effects. The tax cut of 1981, although smaller than proposed, did in fact expand federal revenue and restore prosperity. Why the budget deficit rose is another story.[1]

A final example of Stein's concern for the repute of his mainstream colleagues requires a return to his critique of the radical economists described above. There he properly points out that Lekachman's book does not mention the word "freedom" even once. What he fails to note is that the same word is missing from the works of Arthur Okun, James Tobin, and Lester Thurow—mainstreamers all—who happen to share the radicals' zeal for planning and income equality. The fact is, no matter who is writing, combining freedom with equality of result makes no more sense than applying whipped cream to a dill pickle. □

[1]See my "Open Secrets of the Deficit," *TAS*, July 1985.

ERNIE'S WAR: THE BEST OF ERNIE PYLE'S WORLD WAR II DISPATCHES

Edited by David Nichols/Random House/$19.95

Kent Owen

Had Ernie Pyle not been assigned to cover World War II, he might be recalled today, if at all, as a journeyman feature writer for the Scripps-Howard syndicate. During the thirties he entertained his readers with folksy local-color stories about the odd characters who used to people America. Pyle struck just enough of the quasi-rube pose to bring off a squinty-eyed innocent's view of his country as one big happy small-town family with plenty of eccentric relations. At the time it was competent, amusing, run-of-the-mill work, pretty good for what it was.

Instead of finishing a career in semi-obscurity, Pyle went to war, found his great subject, and filed dispatches that millions took to heart. Off and on from December 1940 until April 1945, his words made Americans understand how the war was being fought and who was doing the fighting, and more than that, what it felt like to be there—what the war meant in human terms.

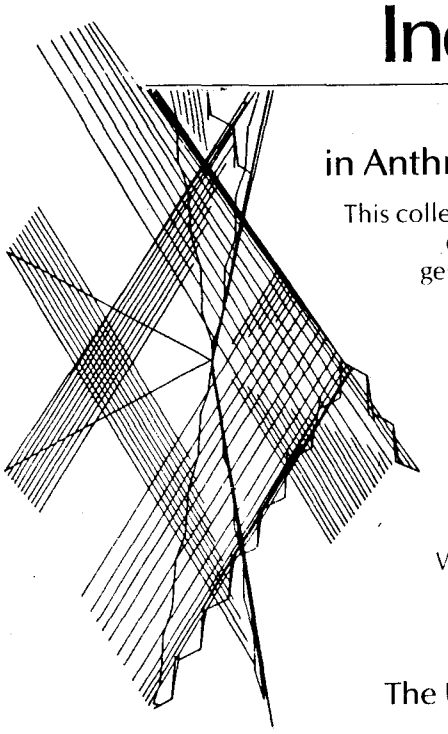
Pyle came to stand for decency, honesty, sincerity—the moral qualities Americans wanted to find in their soldiers and in themselves. With no special talent for saintliness, he was taken to be a moral witness to the war, called on to give evidence about its conduct. In a trade quick to make much of its own heroes and martyrs, Pyle's death by a sniper's bullet in the last days of combat was enlarged into epic tragedy, as if Homer himself had been slain before the walls of Troy.

It was also Pyle's fate to have been born a Hoosier. Which meant that among a people hungry for recognition, let alone respectability, he would inevitably get turned into a folk hero, fit to take his place with Davy Crockett, Jesse James, and Casey Jones in the Pantheon of the Common Man. Or in Indiana's own shrine of the immortals with Abe Lincoln, James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene V. Debs, and John Dillinger. Even though he chose to settle in New Mexico, the mark of the Hoosier was on him, unmistakably so. It wasn't so much his style, which used to kid around in the manner of George Ade, Kin Hubbard, and Don Herold, indulging in playful exaggeration and rib-nudging irony—the humor was still there to leaven the war reports, but in a subdued tone. Rather, it was his way of standing aslant of everyday life and looking at it on the angle, thus being at once involved and somewhat detached. Hoosiers developed this form of self-protection early on, like the quills of a porcupine or the stink of a skunk.

Even at that, Pyle had in common with old-stock Hoosiers an unwillingness, indeed inability, to regard anyone impersonally. Like his landsmen, he found it hard to deal with human beings as so many commodities or inanimate objects, deprived of essential, inherent worth. This doesn't suggest that Pyle (or, for that matter, Hoosiers in general) hurried to embrace his fellows with outpouring affection; only that he sized up persons as singular in-

Kent Owen is The American Spectator*'s Indiana Editor.*

Louis Dumont • Essays on Individualism



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stances and, as such, liked or disliked them according to whatever set of prejudices suited him best.

This approach to life may not be what Jesus had in mind, but there is something to be said for it when it comes to working out social arrangements. In any case, it was the attitude Pyle brought to his work. His was hardly a come-as-you-are tolerance, as his disparagements of Algerian and Tunisian Arabs, Vichy French collaborators, assorted Sicilians and Italians, and the Japanese (he called them Japs, thought them wily and deadly and probably inscrutable) as well as the more Nazified Germans make quite clear. Hence his "humanism" will be faulted as inexcusably racist; all the same there was a war on, and Pyle had no reluctance about identifying the enemy. This has evidently proved a problem for latterday war correspondents.

As memories of the war recede into the nether reaches of public consciousness, Pyle has become a wispy, dimly lighted figure. Why should Random House decide to reissue his choicer reportage forty years later? What do readers of the present need to learn from Ernie Pyle? Is it time again to remind ourselves war is terrible and must never be repeated? That may be the message many will glean from the cuttings, taking cues from Eleanor Roosevelt as epigrapher and Studs Terkel as prefacer. No doubt his work will be put forward as conclusive evidence that any war, however just, is evil, that unilateral disarmament is necessary, that appeasement is the better part of valor.

I doubt that Pyle, much as he hated war, would have approved this line of argument—any better than he liked how *Time* portrayed him in a cover story, how Hollywood depicted him in *The Story of G.I. Joe*, or how he was pestered and fawned on as a celebrity when he came home on leave. For appalled as he was by the enormity of war, Pyle was not a pacifist, and it is intellectually dishonest of ideologues to claim he was. His attitudes about having to observe the twentieth century's second great war and interpret what he saw, felt, and thought for "the folks back home" were too complex to be reduced to the simple absolute of pacifism.

It is part of the value of *Ernie's War* to be able to follow the course of Pyle's own development. To have the dispatches arranged in chronological order—earlier books provided only thematic or topical selections—enables one to discover the actuality of war through the mind of one man: this foxhole, this tank, this dive-bomber, that mountain, these men, person by person, working and fighting together in dull, filthy, exhausting, perilous work.

Pyle was sent to London in December 1940 to cover the blitz. He had been at loose ends in both his work and marriage, tired of writing rather aimlessly about random, often trivial topics; he was more than ready to make a big change. His early dispatches reveal a self-conscious, first-time-out war correspondent eager to report the big show. Suddenly caught up in tremendous events, he tried to stay detached, filing removed accounts of air raids, London under siege, bomb shelter routines, the disrupted lives of ordinary men and women. There are lyrical touches, reflective passages, praise for the unflappable Brits, sympathy for the old people who must have war at the end of their lives; mostly, it is done with the studied objectivity of the professional outsider. In contrast, Edward R. Murrow's CBS radio communiqués are both more informative and more engrossing.

After his return to America in March 1941, Pyle entered the army's war in North Africa in November 1942 to cover the Tunisian campaign with the infantry and the tankers. There he had to live and move with the troops, sharing their discomfort, boredom, and danger, learning what happens to men when the props of civilization are removed. Before long, his reports show a different point of view: Like it or not, he is now an insider, part of the company, day and night, of those who must struggle and fight to stay alive; he is made to feel their hardships and hazards as his very own.

Compare Pyle's writing with that of the *New Yorker*'s A. J. Liebling, and the contrast is plain: Liebling's is a war for connoisseurs, one to be experienced sensuously, understood cerebrally, appreciated in its finer points, even, in a certain sense, to be enjoyed. Pyle's war is no less carefully or skillfully reported, but the emphasis is different: The interaction of men, matériel, weather, landscape is charged with a welter of emotions. The moment, whether in battle or in camp, is alive with energies either set to go off, or spent and numb. What Pyle does is describe the texture of the soldiers' daily existence, inside and out, so that his readers, the folks back home in comfort and safety, can feel something of what the troops are going through.

Oddly enough, little of what Pyle wrote lends itself to being quoted phrase by phrase. His prose gains its power through the interplay of longer lines and passages because, as a sort of prose poetry, it depends on the lengthened cadences of spoken words, as if it were composed to be read aloud to gatherings of those anxious to hear news of their men at the front. It may have been. Taken as isolated images or separate phrases, the lines seldom seem remarkable. But the cumulative force evokes what an action or a place feels like, and the meaning of his words is as much the result of that well-tempered sound as it is in the plain sense of men's names. Pyle addressed his readers directly; "you" was meant to be taken personally, and it was. His plain-spoken American English is idiomatic and conversational, the language of a man whose words can be trusted.

While such considerations may seem nicely aesthetic, Pyle's use of the language produced moral results: It expressed the significance of the war in so trustworthy a way that the nation's resolve grew stronger and steadier. If ethical tests need be applied to his reports, there is nothing that must be discounted because it hints of propaganda or "disinformation." Indeed, he is often startlingly frank about casualties, retreats, runs of bad luck, and utter exhaustion—his own as well as the soldiers'. Though not religious in a conventional sense, he was awed by the persistence of the human spirit in withstanding adversity, in incidental things like keeping warm and dry. And, moreover, in prevailing at last over the Axis might through international cooperation on a monumental scale. Yet Pyle never lost sight of the individual soldier, especially the infantryman, struggling not so much to kill the enemy as to stay alive, regain his freedom, and go home.

David Nichols, a young writer from Fort Wayne, merits our thanks for making Ernie Pyle's finest writing again available in such an intelligent edition. His biographical essay presents Pyle candidly and sensitively, giving a touching account of Jerry Siebolds, the writer's tragically self-destructive wife. In truth, Mr. Nichols and Random House have made an important contribution to American literature, because *Ernie's War* is for the ages. □

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THE MANLY ART: BARE-KNUCKLE PRIZE FIGHTING IN AMERICA

Elliott J. Gorn/Cornell University Press/$24.95

Diana Schaub

With what appears to be academic pugnacity, Elliott J. Gorn asserts in the preface to *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* that "This is 'men's history.' " Gorn, however, is not taking a swipe at the practitioners of "women's history" or, in feminist jargon, "herstory." In fact, he regards the women's studies movement as in his corner, so to speak, for it is the movement's insights into gender consciousness and the malleability of gender roles that inform his understanding of "the manly art." When a book about boxing, especially one that seeks to "interpret" the ring, acknowledges such ideological training, there is cause for concern. Gorn states that "the same biases that rendered women voiceless in the writing of history simultaneously excluded the majority of men, in particular workers, ethnic minorities, and the poor." Thus, he too has a history of oppression to relate: the history of the outlawed pastime of the urban proletariat.

But Gorn has a degree of sympathy with pugilism's opponents—progressives of all types, from the respectable bourgeois who thought boxing kept the lower orders from work and self-improvement to the labor radical who thought it kept the dispossessed from protest and social reform. Although he says he tends "to take the part of the lions over the Christians," he remains ambivalent about prize fighting and the particular male ethos underlying it. He believes that the "Sweet Science of Bruising" (Pierce Egan's fond epithet) is both noble and barbarous, the one quality inextricable from the other. Perhaps surprisingly, this ambivalence improves, maybe even redeems, the work for it enables Gorn to reconstruct, colorfully and faithfully, both the culture of the ring and the culture of its critics. His "simultaneous attraction and repulsion" serves in lieu of true scholarly disinterestedness, and may be what raises Gorn's "men's history" above most "women's history."

Once safely past the preface (wherein authors so frequently simplify the critic's task by making overly revealing confessions about their biases, their method, and their intellectual and moral debts), this book becomes an intelligent contribution to boxiana. Since fisticuffs were an English import, Gorn first takes the reader to the London prize ring (September 28, 1811 for the second Crib-Molineaux fight), there to meet the "fancy," the whole sporting fraternity which drew its members from the highest and the lowest ranks of English society. Although illegal since 1750, boxing flourished in England from the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries because of aristocratic and even royal patronage. Gentleman and player, Corinthian and commoner alike subscribed to what Gorn calls "a male aesthetic." "Bloodletting artfully performed, violence within explicit rules, brutality committed with style—the ring articulated an ideal of manhood that bound displays of sanguine passions within an aesthetic of restraint and decorum." While decorum may have prevailed within the ropes, outside the "magic circle" license was the rule. Pickpockets, professional gamblers, and prostitutes were sure to be part of any boxing crowd, and as "the English claret" streamed and spouted from the fighters, the "blue ruin" (gin) flowed liberally into the spectators.

Among the burgeoning middle class, all leisure activities were suspect; such gladiatorial events as boxing, bear-baiting, cockfighting, and cudgel-play were especially condemned as atavistic and degrading. Dedication to property and family (the bourgeois shibboleths) meant steady habits: caution, calculation, productivity, sobriety, fidelity, and moral earnestness. In sum, the old sports and leisure traditions produced men who were at once too high-hearted and too self-indulgent. The new liberal order required men to be less courageous and more moderate. The Victorian reformers, a coalition of capitalists and evangelicals, were largely successful in their domestication of manliness. From the late 1820s on, bare-knuckle boxing gradually lost its upper-class supporters; it survived, but only furtively, among working men.

During the era of its ascendancy in England, boxing barely existed in America. Republican sentiment was firmly against it, seeing it as a symbol of Old World corruption. Nonetheless, there were occasional bouts here, which increased in frequency as Irish and English immigrants arrived; among them, especially after the suppression of the English prize ring, were many "milling coves" seeking, one might say, freedom of combat. These early matches, less structured than their mother-country antecedents, often dissolved into ethnic brawls. Such incidents of disorder and riot contributed to fears of boxing's socially disruptive influence. As a sign both of boxing's spread and of its failure to gain respectability, newspapers made it a practice to publish an editorial disclaimer condemning prize fighting in conjunction with a round-by-round account of the latest set-to.

The appearance of sparring masters, billing themselves as "professors of pugilism," did much to make boxing acceptable in fashionable circles. The professors offered "scientific" instruction in the art of self-defense to gentlemen interested in a humane and honorable alternative to duelling. They also gave exhibitions of their science—exhibitions that bore deliberately little resemblance to prize fights. The combatants donned gloves and demonstrated their skills for a mere three rounds with no purse at stake (by contrast, bare-knuckle contests sometimes lasted upwards of 100 rounds). So despite opposition, by the 1850s, boxing in both its plebeian and refined varieties seemed firmly established in America.

Gorn is a fine storyteller. His sketches of the antebellum champions—James "Yankee" Sullivan, Tom "the Chief" Hyer, John "Old Smoke" Morrissey, and John C. "the Benicia Boy" Heenan—capture not just their

Diana Schaub is assistant managing editor of the National Interest.

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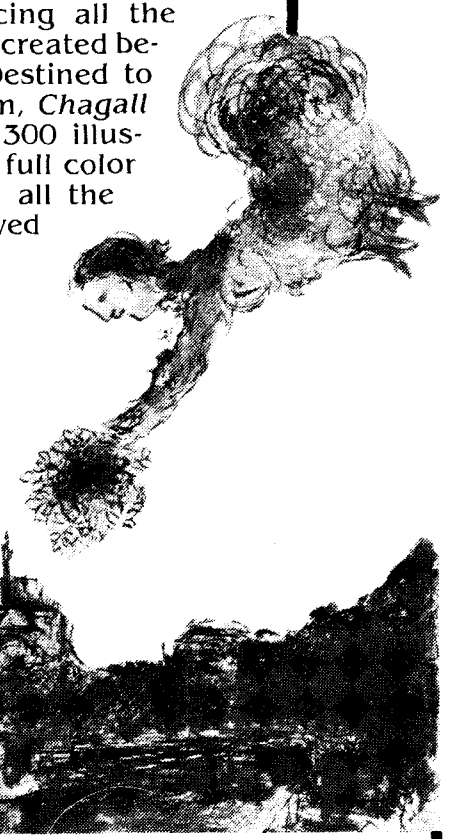

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individual personalities, entertaining though these are, but the entire street and saloon subculture in which they moved, and which overlapped in predictable, and not so predictable, ways with the world of big city politics. He mixes in a fair bit of fight footage, clipped from the penny dailies, the sporting magazines, and *American Fistiana*. It is gorier stuff than nowadays:

> Round 70th.—McCoy was now indeed a most unseemly object: both eyes were black—the left one nearly closed, and indeed that whole cheek presented a shocking appearance. His very forehead was black and blue; his lips were swollen to an incredible size, and the blood streamed profusely down his chest. My heart sickened at the sorry sight. When he came up he appeared very weak, and almost gasping for breath, and endeavored, while squaring away, to eject the clotting fluid from his throat.

Unbelievably, this fight would last thirty-nine more rounds before McCoy finally collapsed and died, drowned in his own blood.

This first fatality—so clearly avoidable had the referee, the seconds, the other fighter, or even the crowd behaved responsibly—invigorated the anti-prize fight crusade. Nonetheless, the ritualized violence of the ring continued, albeit with greater circumspection. Meanwhile, the nation moved inexorably toward its own paroxysm of violence. The Civil War, whatever its meaning for the country, Gorn shows to have been a great boon to boxing, nationalizing its appeal. Boxers-turned-soldiers introduced their fellows to the sport and many officers encouraged it as a suitably martial camp recreation. But soon after the war, the rottenness of the Gilded Age infected boxing. Because it was never legal, and hence had no regulatory body to standardize and enforce rules, prize fighting was more susceptible to underworld infiltration than other sports. Fixed matches, toughs who guaranteed their man's victory with a pistol to the referee's head if necessary, and renewed police interference discredited the ring once again.

Perhaps the most fascinating chapters are those that trace prize fighting's final redemption—a redemption made possible in part by the Marquis of Queensberry Rules (providing a ceremonious end to the bare-knuckle era) and in part by the craze for "the strenuous life" that dominated the century's concluding decades. Through the movement known as "Muscular Christianity," evangelical piety reached a compromise with the sporting world. By means of institutions like the YMCA, athletics, including amateur sparring, was enlisted in the service of a new understanding of religious mission. Similarly, the well-to-do developed a new sympathy for vigorous exercise, in response to widespread fear of the effeminizing effect of modern life. Rough sports, particularly boxing with its uniquely elemental quality, were the natural antidote to the threat of "neurasthenia" (the loss of vital "nerve force"). So thought Teddy Roosevelt and many with him.

With the way thus prepared for the ring's rejuvenation, all it took was a sanitizing rule change (disallowing wrestling holds and throws, requiring gloves, establishing the three-minute round, one minute rest, and ten-second count, and permitting the ring to be pitched indoors) to transform boxing into first-rate commercial entertainment. Gorn gives an insightful analysis of the effect of the new rules: As befits such a kinetic age, they quickened the tempo (in the process, depriving fighters of control over the pace of the action), put a premium on clean, dramatic blows and knockouts (decreasing the importance of "bottom" or endurance), made boxing look less rough and tumble but in no sense made it less dangerous, and perhaps most significantly, by moving boxing indoors, made effective crowd control possible. As a result, boxing became safe for the spectators and lucrative for the promoters. Moreover, in the garish and grand John L. Sullivan, the rehabilitated prize ring found its first celebrity. Although he is now venerated as the last of the great bare-knucklers, "the Boston Strong Boy" or simply "the Boy" was in fact responsible for popularizing the Queensberry rules (according to Gorn, he fought only two true bare-knuckle matches, one to gain the title and one to defend it).

In the epilogue, Gorn shows himself plainly saddened and discomfited by the absorption of boxing into the mainstream. Whereas in the preface he had voiced certain classically "liberal" reservations about the morality of the ring, his reflections on the end of the bare-knuckle era express an entirely different sort of reservation, one that seems profoundly conservative, not to say reactionary. He laments the marketing of "the male aesthetic," and the accompanying transformation of "the fancy" into fans. What pretended to be the re-masculinization of America turned out to be a new dispensation in which Americans became consumers of an image of manliness. While he does not state it so boldly, the conclusion is there to be drawn: The nineteenth century offered competing, and perhaps equally choice-worthy, understandings of "manliness" (self-reliance and self-control versus honor and valor); in the twentieth century, both understandings have been undermined. "The manly art" may still be with us, but manliness seems to have disappeared. □

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THE CATHOLIC CLASSICS

Dinesh D'Souza/Our Sunday Visitor/$6.95 paper

Michael A. Scully

In his book *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1953), R. W. Southern quotes the account of an eleventh-century French abbot concerning Scots come to France to assemble for the first Crusade. Not only had the French never seen such men (it is thought that this is the earliest description of Scottish dress), the Scots and their more refined allies spoke not a word of each other's tongues. The abbot described the strangers:

> Drawn from their native swamps, with their bare legs, rough cloaks, purses hanging from their shoulders, hung about in arms, ridiculous enough in our eyes but offering the aid of their faith and devotion to our cause.

This is, I think, one of history's moving scenes: the rough Scots, in their primitive dress, marching up some French hillside to a monastery, unable to communicate with their hosts, except to announce their intention by crossing their fingers to make the sign of the cross.

I do not know whether Evelyn Waugh was familiar with this incident, but when I reread Southern's description recently, I could not help thinking of the closing passages of *Brideshead Revisited*. At the end of the last chapter, Waugh describes Lord Marchmain's deathbed repentance, which Charles Ryder narrated this way:

> I suddenly felt the longing for a sign, if only for courtesy, if only for the sake of the woman I loved, who knelt in front of me, praying, I knew, for a sign. It seemed so small a thing that was asked, the bare acknowledgment of a present, a nod in the crowd. . . .

Then, as Ryder describes, the priest anointed the head of the dying Lord Marchmain, whose hand began to move, perhaps, Ryder feared, to wipe away the oil.

> "O God," I prayed, "don't let him do that." But there was no need for fear; the hand moved slowly down his breast, then to his shoulder, and Lord Marchmain made the sign of the cross. Then I knew that the sign I had asked for was not a little thing, not a passing nod of recognition, and a phrase came back to me from my childhood of the veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom.

The reader of such magnificent passages will be hard pressed to remember that there are more illiterates in heaven than literates—even proportionately more. We know this because, among other things, the tradition tells us as much. (The Word that was in the Beginning was willed, not written, and certainly not read.) Yet because we humans are as we are, most of us seek not only to believe, but also to understand. In this endeavor books, though not absolutely necessary, are of immense value. Thus it follows that one mark of a robust religious tradition is that it produces writings that inspire and explain, and preferably both.

It comes as no surprise, for example, that the dynamism of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestantism in our day should exhibit itself in book writing and publishing, as in so many other ways. (There are over 7,000 evangelical bookstores in the United States.) Of course, at great expense of money and effort, evangelical preachers offer scores of hours of weekly nationwide television programming, which in some cases includes telephone "hotlines" for counseling (anti-suicide, pregnancy, family disputes, and the like) and some remedial social services. Typical of its current doldrums, America's Roman Catholic Church not only seems to be having a hard time offering more than a few weekly syndicated hours of anemic programming, but the one person, a spunky Alabama nun, who has successfully entered the field of religious broadcasting had to overcome considerable resistance from members of the hierarchy. As it is with television evangelism (a field pioneered, let it be remembered, by Catholic clerics such as Bishop Fulton Sheen), so has Catholic publishing declined relative to its own past and the publishing efforts of other religious groups.

No one walking into a Catholic bookstore today, not to mention the typical commercial bookstore, would think that within living memory there existed a notable Catholic literary tradition. I have before me a reprint of a 1935 book, by a Jesuit priest, called *The Catholic Literary Revival* (Calvert Alexander, S. J., Kennikat Press, 1968). The book is a survey of the most prominent writers on Catholic subjects from 1845 to 1935, and its acknowledgments require over a page of tiny print to thank 16 publishers of 37 books by 22 authors for permission to quote copyrighted material. A half century later, hardly any books, even by the most prominent authors, are in print in popularly priced editions: a few of Chesterton's, besides his Father Brown stories, and somewhat over a dozen among all the works of Cardinal Newman, Hilaire Belloc, Christopher Dawson, Ronald Knox, and Jacques Maritain.

In his preface to Dinesh D'Souza's new book, *The Catholic Classics*, New York's Cardinal John J. O'Connor recalls wistfully the high point of Catholic publishing, the 1930s and 1940s, its vibrancy, and the hopes for a spiritual renascence it inspired:

> New editions of G. K. Chesterton began to proliferate at the time, side by side with portable Cardinal Newmans. Publishers Frank and Maisie Ward were becoming household names. Hilaire Belloc, Paul Claudel, Francois Mauriac, Leon Bloy, Georges Bernanos, Evelyn Waugh, Eric Gill and even, for the more mystically oriented, Gerard Manley Hopkins—all became known, all evoked to a greater or lesser degree some sense of what Frank O'Malley called "the integrating power of a real faith and truth."

Both a knowledge of what has been, and thus might be again, and an awareness of the current condition of American Roman Catholicism make D'Souza's book very welcome indeed. Here is an echo from that vibrant earlier time: a writer of impressive gifts, illuminating ten great books of Christianity, so that we might understand and appreciate the books and their authors' quests for faith or sanctity. One mark of D'Souza's success is that *The Catholic Classics* can be read with profit by precocious high school sophomores and adult readers alike. Most surveys lose one or the other audience through pedantry on the one hand, or oversimplification on the other. D'Souza avoids both failings with a performance intelligently planned and executed virtually without flaw.

The Catholic Classics comprises ten essays, each concerned with a great writer and his most famous work. From Augustine's *Confessions* to Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*, each of D'Souza's studies attends as much to the writer and his search for faith, or the sufferings demanded of him because of his faith, as to the particular work discussed. For example, D'Souza begins his chapter on Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* with a brief discussion of its interest as a book of philosophy, but shortly begins to tell us about Boethius himself, his birth to a prominent Roman

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Michael A. Scully is editor of This World. *His anthology,* The Best of THIS WORLD, *containing twenty-seven essays from the journal's first five years, was published in October by University Press of America.*

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family four years after the Fall of Rome in A.D. 476, his education, and his eventual entry into the government of the barbarian ruler of Rome, Theodoric, to whom he became chief minister at about the age of forty. Boethius's energetic defense of a consul accused of treason provided Boethius's enemies with the opportunity they desired to implicate him in the plot. Theodoric, obsessed with fears that he might be deposed and killed (as he had deposed and killed his predecessor), spurned Boethius, who was shortly convicted of treason and sentenced to death. If Boethius had been a more clever political operator, he would have passed into obscurity fourteen hundred years ago. Instead, while awaiting death, Boethius wrote *Consolation of Philosophy*, which became perhaps the most popular Christian work of the Middle Ages.

In other chapters D'Souza discusses Bede (*Ecclesiastical History*), Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*), Pascal (*Pensées*), Thomas a Kempis (*Imitation of Christ*), Newman (*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*), and Chesterton (*Orthodoxy*). D'Souza's summaries of texts and explanations of philosophical and theological arguments are never less than sure-handed. His biographical sketches are terse and sensitive; they are enhanced by a fine eye for detail. William F. Buckley, in a moving introduction, notes D'Souza's portrait of the serene death of the historian Bede after months of illness:

> The day after the feast of the Ascension he was alone with one of his pupils, who was taking down notes he dictated. It was hard for Bede to go on, but despite the student's protestations, he insisted that the boy keep writing. As his energy began to leave his body, Bede summoned the priests, who said Mass for him and gave him the last sacraments. After this the boy, nervous and afraid, blurted out, "Sir, there is still a sentence which is not written down." Bede replied, "Well, then go ahead and write it." When the boy said, "It is finished," Bede sat back. "You have said the truth," he said. "It is finished." He sang the *Gloria Patri* and died.

When ecclesiastical historians survey the twentieth century, they will note a great irony: an unprecedented expansion of Christianity, and especially Catholicism, has taken place in the less developed world, while simultaneously the "old world" of Christianity—including, most disappointingly, the United States—has been wallowing in confusion and, sometimes, bad faith. For a couple of decades now, there have been more Catholics in the southern hemisphere than in the northern; the shift to the south continues apace. More and more, the Church finds itself being governed—and inspired—by modern equivalents of rough, bare-legged Scots. Lacking, as it were, sophistication, they maintain a hold on common life, including its suffering and its miraculousness. Perhaps, therefore, they grasp more intensely than many of us the centrality of the symbol of salvation, fashioned after an instrument of death. In their parts of the globe, not yet overrun with social policy conferences, it is easier to remember that the most Christian act is to wash the pus from one dying person's festering sore.

Dinesh D'Souza's offering does not say this, but it is about, and in the tradition of, writers who understood it. As such, it provides proof to the repented Charles Ryders of the world that the small red flame, which the old knights saw, burns ever and anew. □

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BRIDESHEAD BENIGHTED
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THE DIARIES OF AUBERON WAUGH
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Terry Teachout

Auberon Waugh, editor of the *Literary Review*, has given considerable thought to "the ethics of gossip, scandalmongering and personal abuse" and has decided that "for the most part they are perfectly all right." As a result of this uncompromising stance, he has become one of England's best-known and most controversial right-wing journalists. ("If we could all agree to behave as if the man did not even exist," Christopher Hitchens wrote in the *New Statesman* a few years ago, "that might be the answer.")

Mr. Waugh's formidable reputation as a literary troublemaker has never quite managed to take hold in the United States, where he is chiefly known as Evelyn Waugh's oldest son. But this unfortunate state of affairs now seems to be changing for the better. Mr. Waugh's work is turning up in such stylish domestic venues as *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's*, while his two most recent books have just been brought out in American editions: *Brideshead Benighted*, a collection of his "Another Voice" columns for the *Spectator*, and *The Diaries of Auberon Waugh: A Turbulent Decade, 1976-1985*, a selection from the "diaries" he contributed to the British magazine *Private Eye* from 1972 to 1986.

One very much doubts, however, that Mr. Waugh will ever become all that popular in this country. He is far too tough a customer. Americans have been systematically taught to favor the pomaded hypocrisies and discreetly draped biases of our syndicated columnists and television anchormen over the masculine ferocity of an Auberon Waugh, who affords in his best writing the same robust pleasure that columnists like Westbrook Pegler once offered daily: the titillating thrill of hearing one's deepest social prejudices fearlessly shouted into a bullhorn:

> The New Briton . . . is white and overweight, flip, cynical, ignorant and boastful; untrustworthy in business matters, overconfident in conversation yet infinitely gullible in his cynicism, insecure in his boastfulness. He eats bad food greedily and is loud in his praise of nasty wine. He wears his hideous moustache in a downward-turning bow and invariably says "No way!" when he means "I think perhaps not." His wife is even worse, with a terrible underlying seriousness which turns everything it touches to dust. Both are planning to vote for the Social Democratic Party next time round.

Some of this ferocity is doubtless sheer affectation. ("I have an open mind about queer-bashing. From one point of view it seems rather cruel, although from another I can see it might be necessary on occasions.") But Mr. Waugh's affectations exaggerate rather than distort. The Auberon Waugh of the *Private Eye* diaries may be playing for laughs, but the Auberon Waugh of *Brideshead Benighted* is a man who believes, among other things, that "majority preferences are, by and large, things to be avoided and where possible frustrated," who argues that the British left aspires to "a malleable population of government employees, second-class citizens and welfare fodder," who fears "the unspeakable horrors of a society dominated by proletarian tastes and appetites."

Auberon Waugh is a Tory, in other words, and it is this quality more than anything else which is likely to alienate the average American reader. H. L. Mencken was probably the last unashamed Tory to be widely read in this country, and his popularity evaporated as soon as people saw him for what he was. (The fact that George Will can get away with calling himself a Tory these days merely serves to prove the point.) Even American conservatives have lately been seduced by the optimism of Ronald Reagan into what Mencken delicately referred to as "the uplift." Mr. Waugh is having none of this. He sees "the urge to power" as "a personality disorder in its own right,

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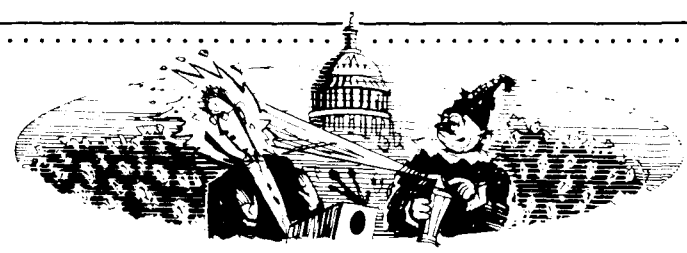
like the urge to sexual congress with children or the taste for rubber underwear." He is so fully committed to this drastic position, in fact, that he is willing to write off Margaret Thatcher with the same utter finality that attaches to his dismissal of the British left:

> Politics, as I never tire of saying, is for social and emotional misfits, handicapped folk, those with a grudge. The purpose of politics is to help them overcome these feelings of inferiority and compensate for their personal inadequacies in the pursuit of power. . . . The only thing that any of them is really interested in is the chance to make decisions and see them put into effect—to press a button and watch us all jump.

Auberon Waugh, as it happens, is something of a case study in the risks and pitfalls of the reactionary position. Judging the overall situation in England to be hopeless, he nonetheless repudiates the possibility of mitigating action. His preferred response is one of urbane stoicism. "There are," he says, "countless horrible things happening all over the country, and horrible people prospering, but we must never allow them to disturb our equanimity or deflect us from our sacred duty to sabotage and annoy them whenever possible." Openly lukewarm towards the comforts of religion, he opts instead for "that tranquillity of mind which, in an irreligious age, must fill the place of our being's end and aim." Even the most cursory reading of *Brideshead Benighted* and *The Diaries of Auberon Waugh* suggests the underlying inadequacy of this philosophical position. For Mr. Waugh is more than a little short of the very "tranquillity of mind" he so eloquently espouses, and his anger, usually tonic, sometimes flares up into something very much like nihilism. ("I find myself more than ever on the side of the Distillers Company against the money-mad thalidomide parents and their slop-mongering friends in the Press.")

For the most part, though, Auberon Waugh eschews the empty nihilism of the agnostic Tory in favor of a far more genial quality: that principled malice which lends true savor to wit. Mr. Waugh may be deadly serious when it comes to first principles, but he is also, to use his own phrase, a "practitioner of the vituperative arts," and these arts are practiced with matchless flair throughout the laugh-flecked pages of *Brideshead Benighted* and *The Diaries of Auberon Waugh*. Mr. Waugh suggests at one point that the rigidity of the British libel laws has inevitably pulled the teeth of controversialists like himself. Maybe so, but it's hard to see how. □

THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR



Marty Peretz, only half-jokingly, called it the best lunch ever at the liberal *New Republic*, even though both sides fought to a standstill, the hosts insisting that the guest should and will run for President in 1988, the guest denying any such intention and likelihood. For my part, I was there to see whether *TNR*'s would-be President was in any way a closet conservative, as recently rumored in *TAS*. There's no denying the man's attractive personal qualities. He's soft-spoken, straightforward, and at least as smart as Michael Kinsley and Leon Wieseltier combined. Nor does he take himself too seriously. When Sidney Blumenthal asked a side-winding three-part question, he answered the first part and then asked Blumenthal to repeat the second. We've all heard about his courageous vote for contra aid. We also know about his commitment to economic growth, as seen in his leading role in tax reform, a feat he's determined to top by finding solutions to the debt crisis in Latin America. What impresses here is not that these issues are necessarily conservative, but that he approaches them in a bipartisan spirit, no small trick for a Democrat in an age of reactionary liberalism. Yet is this any reason for conservatives to be carried away? I admit the temptation is strong, particularly when you also hear him announce that he tended to agree with William Bennett's recent Harvard speech on the whining hypocrisy of the nation's elite universities. But he's not out to fool anyone. As he told the lunch crowd, he remains a firm believer in an affirmative role for government ("nothing to be ashamed of"), in the "land and its renewable capacity," and in the fight for "civil rights"—do not overlook his part in the Senate's attacks on the Rehnquist nomination. And thanks to Norman Podhoretz in the November *Commentary*, we might finally be asking: What was Bill Bradley doing congratulating the *Nation* on its 120th anniversary last March?

• • •

On October 31, the Hon. Richard L. Walker stepped down as our ambassador to the Republic of Korea. He recently compiled these thoughts after a trip to the DMZ:

A parallel which might help to make current problems and perspectives of Korea somewhat more comprehensible in Washington would go somewhat as follows: The United States has been tragically divided, and two competing governments face each other across a neutral zone which stretches from the Chesapeake Bay at about the level of Glen Burnie for 150 miles across Maryland to the west through Gaithersburg. North of the neutral zone are forces which outgun the forces in the south more than two to one, and many of their effective artillery pieces are targeted directly on key installations in Washington—the Pentagon, the White House, the State Department. A mobile tank and armored force, also more than twice the size of forces in the south, is poised to drive down the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and I-95 with almost no notice. In Washington, students at American University and at Georgetown University are threatening demonstrations which could spill over into the city and erupt in violence. They are being encouraged by broadcasts from Baltimore (Kaesong in Korea). Washington's allies seem perplexed as to why the leadership seems so jittery and anxious to clamp down on dissension. The capital in the north, Wilmington, Delaware (Pyongyang), has concentrated on the accumulation of a formidable arsenal of offensive weapons, has positioned most of its military logistic support base underground close to the neutral zone, and proclaims that it is waiting for the opportune moment when protests are sufficiently serious to move south. The rest of the world seems remote from the crisis and little willing to listen to problems faced by Washington. It insists that Washington should be relaxed and allow opposition and demonstrations to take place as a part of the normal democratic processes . . .

• • •

George McGovern and the little old lady next to me grew up in the same small town of Mitchell, South Dakota. But, she told me, they had never met, which is why she was at Foundry Methodist Church to hear and see the man in all his greatness, to drink in those stately gestures and maybe—just maybe—to touch his raiment. There were others, too, come to hear McGovern preach on the topic of "love of country." Ordinary Americans all, from across the wide expanse of America that was and is McGovern Country: Manhattan, Harvard Square, Cape Cod. McGovern began his sermon by testifying to the importance of politics in his life, which is not an odd thing at all to say from a Methodist pulpit, especially this Methodist pulpit, which not ten minutes before held Foundry's regular pastor reading from the Methodist bishops' pronouncement on nuclear disarmament. McGovern went on to tell us how much he loved his country. Of how, when he left politics for good in 1981, he and his wife Eleanor drove around the country to seven national parks and were overcome by the natural beauty of the land. Of how the true measure of patriotism was in loving one's country enough to want to make it better. It was an affecting performance, carried out with a certain grace and humor. He was cheering, he said, for the Red Sox in the World Series, and then he admitted with a rueful smile—"I have to say that, considering that I carried only Massachusetts." Down the street no more than a block from Foundry Methodist is Washington's First Baptist Church where Jimmy Carter used to go for spiritual nourishment when he was President. It is not difficult to imagine that in ten years Carter will return there some Sunday, and little old ladies from Plains will come to see him and drink in his greatness. For those swamped by public life, there is a certain sanctuary in the pulpit, where ideas once scorned can be repeated softly and slowly, with rueful smiles and statesmanlike shrugs. "Oh, he's such a dear person," my little old lady told me, and then she ran off to put her hand in the hand of the man from South Dakota. —*GJN*

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CURRENT WISDOM

The Great Books Series

The Rev. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., whom the redoubtable *National Review* felicitously designated in its March 17, 1978 issue as "the Professor of Darkness," makes another obscure point in a sacred ceremony pursuant to his mysterious calling:

But Jimmy Carter rejected the commitment of the modern Democratic party to affirmative government and became the most conservative Democratic President since Grover Cleveland a century earlier. He derided the federal service, advocated deregulation, promised to balance the budget, combatted inflation with high interest rates and recession and encouraged the injection of religion into public affairs. From a longer perspective, the difference between Carter and Reagan will seem less consequential than the continuities.

[from The Cycles of American History, *by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Houghton Mifflin, $22.95]*

Rolling Stone

The story of how Rick Lindley became a grown-up, delivered with the *Stone*'s typical pizzazz:

Rick Lindley, a loquacious twenty-three-year-old who recently graduated from the University of Kansas, is old enough to have a definite before-and-after sex life. He came out during his senior year in high school and first had sex when he was eighteen. "I found out about AIDS a year and a half after I came out. I hadn't been doing safe sex," he acknowledges cheerfully. "In fact, I confess, I was a tramp, I was a scamp, I was a slut, I was a mall bunny. There's a pedestrian mall in Kansas City, near the Liberty Memorial, where after 10:00 p.m. it becomes a cruising site. And when I was first having sex, I admit, I did dent a couple of car hoods. But I only did it one summer. There were *all these diseases*. It finally dawned on me that it was not safe, and it was kind of tacky."

[September 25, 1986]

Chicago Tribune

George Bloyd—a professor, one would assume—describes the stupendous grace that naturally issues from the First Lady of the fabulous Soviet democracy:

I have nothing but admiration for the animated and outgoing Raisa Gorbachev, so clearly visible during the Iceland mini-summit. She radiated happiness and good will as she fulfilled her tasks. Any country could benefit from the services of this charismatic ambassador.

In contrast, the American First Lady seems reserved, cautious, somehow fearful of revealing herself. She could learn from the vibrant Raisa. A First Lady should mirror the spirit—the ethos—of all Americans. She cannot put her own wishes before those of the people. Nancy has a way to go.

[October 20, 1986]

American Statesman

(Austin, Texas)

The cruel condition of two Renaissance minds in far-off Austin, as reported by the more idealistic of the two:

Naively encouraged by the words of a Music Umbrella spokesman who granted my husband Steven and me sponsorship for our application for city arts funding, we conscientiously made our bid for money to acquire necessary equipment to turn our "home-style" multi-media photography /music/poetry production *A Time for Peace* into a professional presentation. We proposed to offer it at least once a week to the culturally and inspirationally needy of the community: those people in hospitals, nursing homes, state institutions, schools, and the like.

The peer-panel which made funding recommendations to the Austin City Council denied us any encouragement or support, responding that our intent seemed sincere, but our philosophy, vague; our application, weak. No one ever asked to see our slides, to hear our poetry or songs—the works which would have spoken for themselves.

As artists/educators/psychologists/philosophers, all of which we consider ourselves, nothing is so painful or frustrating as having been given such gifts and not having means to share them with others.

—Suzanne Hubbell

[September 17, 1986]

New York Times

First Secretary Gorbachev reports back to the grateful Soviet masses on his astonishing encounter with the West's preeminent champion of lubricious capitalism:

When touching upon humanitarian affairs, I told the President: "Take, for example, cinematography. A great number of American films are shown on the Soviet screen. Soviet people have an opportunity through them to get an idea of both the way of life and the way of thinking of Americans, whereas Soviet films are practically not shown in 'Free America.' "

The President evaded an answer and, as usual in such cases, pleaded free enterprise under which everyone does whatever one wants.

[October 23, 1986]

Esquire

In the correspondence section of the magazine for "man at his best," Ithaca's Russell Schechter deftly deflates yet another puff piece from the Reaganite school of journalism:

Praise be to Sanford J. Ungar for showing us what a neat guy Ed Meese is ("Ed the Ordinary," July). Perhaps next month Esquire can feature Ungar's profile of Pol Pot.

—Russell Schechter
Ithaca, N.Y.

[November 1986]

New Republic

Supply-side economics gets the send-up from envy's champion and New Puritanism's comic genius, Mr. Michael Kinsley:

Capitalist theory—especially in its Classic-Comics version, supply-side economics—is based on narrowly behavioristic assumptions about human psychology. People are moved to be productive in order to increase their claims on the goods and services produced by others. They work in order to buy. But this incentive is at constant risk of being snuffed out by taxes, which lower the trade-off between effort and material reward.

The Forbes 400 demonstrates that all the main actors in the American economy are exempt from these basic assumptions about what makes the economy tick. They can't possibly be the rational maximizers of economics textbooks. Why do they do it? "It's a sickness I have in the face of which I am helpless," explains arbitrageur Ivan Boesky ($200 million). That's melodramatic, but there must be a grain of truth. A sensible maximizer would stop accumulating at $10 or $20 million, when it becomes pointless. But few do that. The explanation must be that the type of person who would be inclined to stop at $10 million—that is, most of us—won't get to $10 million in the first place.

The lesson is not that all mega-millionaires are social parasites, though many are. The lesson is that all the ludicrous coddling of wealth in recent years—the large tax cuts, the virtual abandonment of death duties, the cultural celebration of the rich—has been unnecessary. Human greed, the seed of capitalist prosperity, is hardier than that.

[November 10, 1986]

The Progressive

Another clear-headed observation of injustice from the *Progressive*, a long-time critic of America's ferociously right-wing media:

Accused spies, too, are entitled to the presumption of innocence.

When it comes to covering cases of espionage, the mass media drop any pretense of objectivity. The issue of *Newsweek* dated September 22 offered a perfect example: "Neither Nicholas Daniloff, the reporter arrested on trumped-up charges, nor Gennady Zakharov, the Soviet agent caught red-handed, was free to go home." This is the sort of heavy-handed propaganda we tend to associate with the official press of totalitarian states, but it is typical of the way the U.S. press reports on allegations of espionage.

When *Newsweek* wrote its account, Daniloff and Zakharov were in identical positions: Each had been accused, neither had been tried. Daniloff had been in possession of "secret" documents when arrested, and so had Zakharov. Each said he was innocent and had been set up. Each had the full backing of his government. What, then, except the urge to be the Administration's press agent, justified *Newsweek*'s use of such terms as "caught red-handed" and "arrested on trumped-up charges"?

[November 1986]

Los Angeles Times

A magisterial declaration from the irenic Michelle Phillips, undergoing therapy on the correspondence page of the Golden State's *Times*:

I have had it!

My 4-year-old son and I attended a birthday party recently for a little boy turning 5.

When I arrived, the presents had been opened and the children were running around the vast grounds shooting each other with Rambo M-16s, Rambo .45 revolvers and Uzi submachine guns.

The mothers sat around smiling and chatting, sipping diet colas as the hand grenades were thrown and the little tots killed each other off one by one.

As the carnage continued, my son looked at me as if to question if he too could go on a killing spree with his peers. The look I returned obviously answered his question and he hopped on a bike to ride alone.

Later, when I discussed this nauseating scene with a friend I was told that I was making too much out of it and would only emphasize my son's longings for a gun by depriving him of it.

Well, I've thought long and hard on the subject and have come to this conclusion. My son will *not* be allowed to own guns and those given him will be added to the melt-down sculpture created by a pal in Venice where all toys designed for the destruction of human life will meet a fiery end.

Parents have to take a stand. Our children can only look to us as examples, and if we advocate playing with killing objects we subliminally advocate killing.

The NO WAR TOYS slogan is not dead in this family and the lesson learned is love for humanity.

—Michelle Phillips
Los Angeles

[October 4, 1986]

Washington Post

A depressing metamorphosis in the American stallion as elucidated by feminist Barbara Ehrenreich, a frequent critic of the shaved-leg look of the American woman:

Ehrenreich chuckles at what she calls "fashions in masculinity": "I thought we were getting somewhere a few years ago when we had impressed on men that we preferred so-called sensitivity—by which we did not mean a man who could talk for three hours about himself. . . . We meant a man who could also listen. We meant men who were generally interested in women. . . . There's nothing sexier in a man than a genuine interest in women."

But suddenly—Ehrenreich traces it back to the invasion of Grenada—the sensitive man was scoffed at and called a wimp: "Suddenly the style in masculinity is somebody who is insensitive and can't talk about emotions . . ."

[October 19, 1986]

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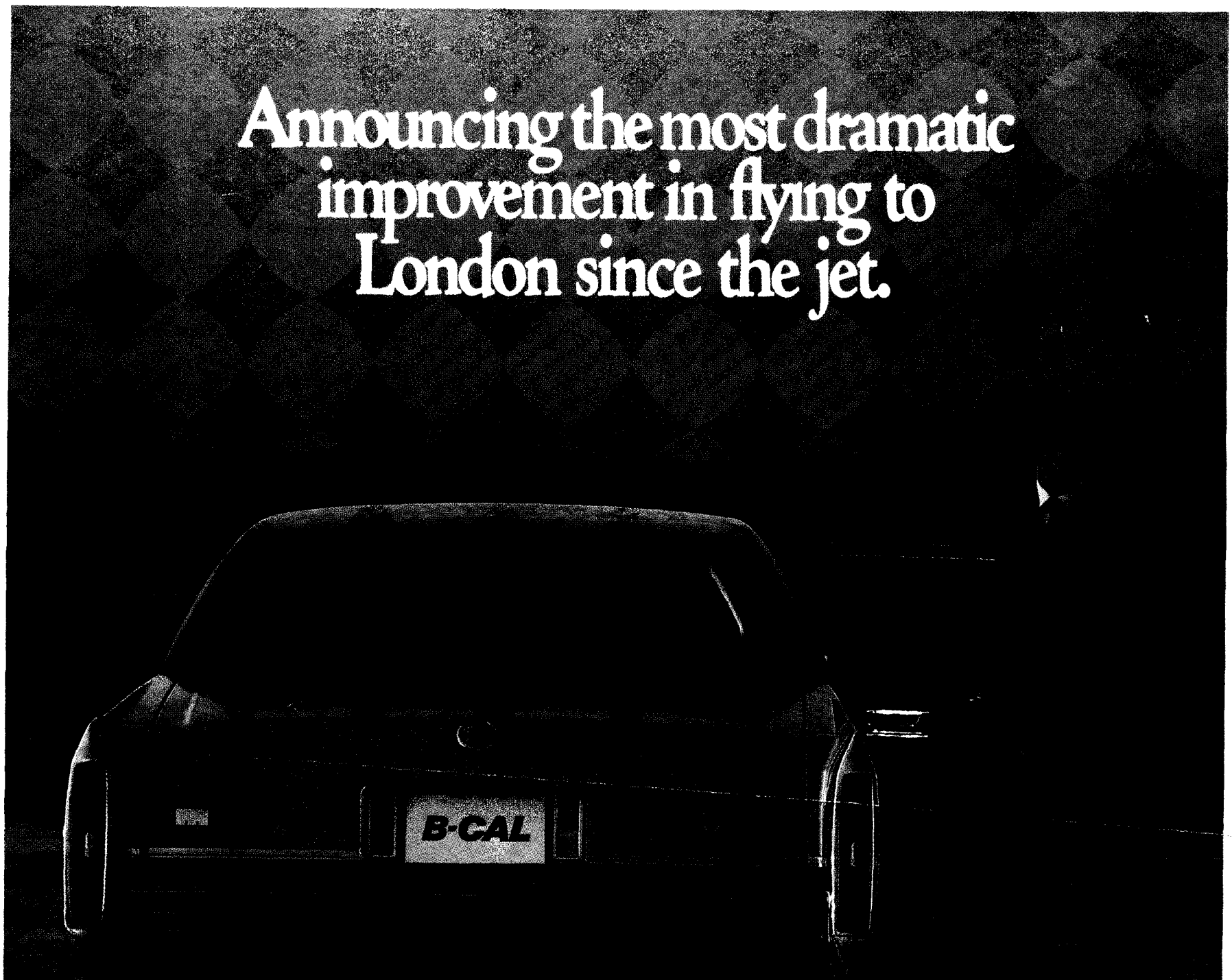

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